

“A Veil, and not a Wall”¹

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On occasion we have conversations with loved ones leaving us reflective and inspired. On a recent visit to our son’s home, I had the opportunity to speak with my granddaughter who was baptized that day. While her cousins watched an action-adventure movie, she lay on a couch in the other room in quiet contemplation, staring at the wall.

Scout is sweet, smart and incredibly perceptive of her surroundings. She is also very sociable. It was unusual for her to be separated from her cousins. Curious as to why she remained alone in an adjacent room, I sat down next to her and engaged her in quiet conversation. The substance of our conversation has left me in deep reflection since.

I suspect the reason Scout remained alone was because she is trying to sort out the significance of her baptism. It was not a decision taken lightly. Scout had seen friends baptized in churches most of her life. The water is calm and warm, not unlike the swimming pool at her home. Her baptism was not in a building, but in “living waters” freely flowing in a cool stream miles from her home. Fearful of the experience she promised her parents she would follow God but pleaded not to have to enter the cold stream. Her parents patiently persuaded her not to succumb to her fears.

Trusting in her parents and mustering enough faith to proceed, Scout was thinking about the scriptures and their importance. Initially I thought it would be a good idea to teach her about Lehi’s dream of the Tree of Life, but the thought passed quickly. My thoughts were drawn to something my daughter, Lauren shared with our family.

Lauren has a friend whose eldest son has an extreme case of autism. He is now fifteen years old and has never spoken to his parents and siblings until now. Recently

¹ “The view into heaven is as thin as the razor’s edge. You must be perfectly perpendicular to this world to see through that narrow opening. But when you are, eternity opens to your view. It is a veil, and not a wall, to make it possible to pass through. It is you that must change and align yourself to the opening if you want a view of what is to be seen there. You cannot readjust the opening. You can only realign yourself” (*Second Comforter, Conversing with the Lord through the Veil*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.284).

her son was introduced to an alphabetic chart at his school by teachers and a therapist. He points to letters and spells words and sentences. Initially, he only did this at school but recently began communicating with his mother through this medium.

The young man was crying at school and was sad. When asked why, he said,

“I was sad. Grandma [recently deceased] loves us and kissed me today. Kissed me every day since she died. Mom, I love you so much right now. Tons. Enjoy my talking. You might not know I enjoy talking. I talk so much. I just sometimes enjoy my alone time. Living to enjoy talking today to you. I sometimes try to not do spelling. Today I needed to talk to you. You took so long to talk to me. ***My key to talk is gone not yet, so talk to me.*** You so nice. Mom I love you. I am not dead. I enjoy talking to you.

Dad I love you. Today changed my life. Please spell with me. You mom so nice to us. Eat everything today so you won’t be hungry tomorrow. Haha.

Mom I am not lost. ***Not right now. Just no key to talk.*** I miss grandma. I need her. I need so many kisses.

The mother then asked her son, “Where did grandma kiss you today?”
“Nose.”

A short time later he was spelling with his family and said the following:

“. . . without any prompting he shared his testimony of Christ with us and I wanted to share it with you. “I talked to Jesus today. I talk to Him every day. I love Him. He is my Savior Redeemer very much. I testify that He lives.”

After sharing this account with Scout, we talked about the young man’s circumstances. We discussed how there is veil between God and us that is occasionally drawn back to reveal God. The young man, while on earth, was unable to talk with his family, but remained in communication with his deceased grandmother

and Jesus. I explained to Scout that God wants all of us to pull back the veil so we could all know Him.²

At that point we spoke of Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life. We talked about the mists of darkness that frequently blinds those trying to find their way to the Tree of Life and God's presence. We talked of the rod of iron and how it represents the word of God. We discussed how the scriptures provide accounts of many men who successfully pulled back the veil to find God there.

Scout anxiously asked if I knew how to draw back the veil. I told her I had written about it but writing about it and doing are two different things. Writing about it is easy, doing it requires more effort, and lots of practice. Only the Lord knows when we are prepared to see Him.

The movie ended and our conversation concluded with Scout saying, "Grandpa, I liked your story." When we ate later that afternoon, she told her mom about our conversation. Apparently, it remained on her mind. She told her mother about the veil and how she wanted to pull it back and see God. My grandson overheard what Scout said and turned to me saying, "Grandpa, I want to learn how to do that too!" After his comment, he ran into the house and put on his swimming suit.

I was grateful for the quiet conversation with Scout, and I have since thought of it often. What piqued my interest is the young man's interaction with those on the other side. There is so much packed into the brief conversations he shared with his family.

The prior fifteen years his mother and father labored to care for him with no communication, no emotion from him, no knowing who he is and what he was thinking, or if he thought at all. Suddenly bridging the gap between parents and child changed everything. Coming to the realization the young boy is a thinking, functioning person inside a body lacking the ability to speak and interact with his loved ones seems emotionally overwhelming. He, referring to his inability to speak as a "key" sheds new light on the meaning of the term "key" and how we misuse it. The

²² *Verily thus says the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsakes their sins, and comes unto me, and calls on my name, and obeys my voice, and keeps all my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am, and that I am the true light that lights every man who comes into the world, and that I am in the Father and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one — the Father because he gave me of his fullness, and the Son because I was in the world, and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men" (RE T&C 93:1, emphasis added).*

term is usually related to authority. In young man's context, he uses the term in relation to a spiritual gift. Saying, "My key to talk is not gone yet" suggests the key may be temporary and eventually withdrawn according to the Lord's Wisdom.³ The term "keys" is a term of art applying to different spiritual gifts and not exclusively related to authority.

From all appearances he is not considered interactive. His communication breakthrough reveals to his family he is conscious of his surroundings but straddles two worlds, mortality, and immortality. Circumstantial evidence suggests that when someone resides under these conditions' restrictions are placed upon their ability to convey information from the other side of the veil. Why is that? Perhaps the information given him is among those "unspeakable things" God shares with people in mortality under unique circumstances.

Modern revelations confirm this is the case. For example, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received a vision in response to the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple. After the Lord appeared to Joseph and Oliver, the Lord withdrew, and another vision opened to them. In the new vision the Heavens opened, and they described what they saw:

"As this vision closed, the Heavens were again opened to their view, and they saw and beheld, ***and were endowed with knowledge*** from the beginning of the creation to the ends thereof. And ***they were shown unspeakable things from the sealed record of Heaven, which man is not capable of making known, but must be revealed by the Powers of Heaven***" [Angels] (T&C 157:30, emphasis added).

At the conclusion of the vision Joseph and Oliver were overwhelmed by the enormous volume of information they received. In response to this experience, they said:

"And ***they were unable to take it in; therefore, they were commanded to pray and ask to comprehend by the power of the spirit, to***

³ "The Father and the Son are masculine and therefore personified by the word "knowledge." ***The Mother as well as the Son's companion are feminine, and personified by the word "wisdom."*** These personifications reflect an eternal truth about these two parts of the One True God. Knowledge (masculine) initiates, Wisdom (feminine) receives, guides and tempers.

Knowledge can be dangerous ***unless it is informed by wisdom***. Wisdom provides guidance and counsel to channel what comes from knowledge. These are eternal attributes, part of what it means to be a male or a female. ***Creation begins with the active initiative of knowledge, but order and harmony for the creation requires wisdom. Balance between them is required for an orderly creation to exist***" (*Our Divine Parents*, Denver Snuffer, p.5, emphasis added).

*bring all things to their remembrance, even the Record of Heaven which would abide in them.*⁴ Amen and Amen” (T&C 157:32, emphasis added).

The Record of Heaven revealed by the “Powers of Heaven,” was incomprehensible to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Various Heavenly Patriarchal Fathers appeared declaring their dispensations, rights, keys, honors majesty, glory, and Powers of their Priesthood. Line upon line precept upon precept, *endowing them with knowledge*, holding out hope for the work God was yet to perform, “*even the revelations of all things.*” There is no wonder Joseph and Oliver couldn’t take it all in. Like the young man, I suspect many of the things revealed to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery remained unspeakable to mortal men.

In our day, Denver Snuffer spoke of a similar experience he shared with the risen Lord. He shared this experience with Steven Pynakker with the Mormon Book Reviews podcast.

DS: “But I have to candidly admit that I had been a member of the LDS movement for decades and I had sought for and asked for these things, and *while I had had profound spiritual experiences and encounters beyond the veil, I had not encountered the Lord coming to comfort me*, I had certainly not encountered the Lord and His Father taking up their abode with me. And as a consequence of that, I knew my journey had not completed; so *I asked for that.*”

You've had people on... I listened to one interview where a fellow was talking about Masonry and Mormonism and some of the similarities, and he talked about some of the list of things that you can find in an LDS temple endowment and what you find in the Masonic tradition. So without elaborating where it would be inappropriate to do so, I took that “true order of prayer” idea, I dressed in the robes, I gave the signs and the tokens, I made the recitation for the true order of prayer, and I prayed (in my house, alone, with a makeshift altar using an ottoman), and literally asked, you know, that I'd be able to converse with the Lord and enter into His presence, just as the temple

⁴ “. . . Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because that which was *from the beginning* [pre-mortality] *is plainly manifest unto them*, and they receive not the light, and every man whose spirit receives not the light is under condemnation. . .” (RE T&C 93:10, emphasis added). Within everyone there is a personal Record of Heaven that is only revealed by the “Powers of Heaven” who are angelic ministrants. It contains a broad expanse of knowledge and experiences spanning the past and future and has restrictions in the form of “unspeakable things” that cannot be communicated beyond the individual with whom they reside.

ceremony suggests, and you know, wrapped that up and waited expectantly. And after some period of tiring on my knees, I got up and put all my temple clothing away and put them back in the closet, went on with life. Puzzled over that for some time and ultimately concluded that, for whatever reason, that just was not in the cards. ***And so I began to reflect upon all that I HAD received. And I realized that I was really kind of ungrateful. I was one of those people that was wanting more instead of being thankful for what I'd been given.***

DS: ***And I HAD been given much. And so my attitude changed from disappointment and frustration to gratitude and acknowledgment that if nothing else ever happened, that I had been given enough and that I had an assurance that the Lord knew who I was and that He had committed to me an opportunity that was phenomenal.*** I had taught gospel doctrine and priesthood for nearly three decades. I had learned and studied and grown and been faithful. ***And I just gave up on that and instead focused on my gratitude to God for all that had been given. And unexpectedly and without me doing (as far as I could tell) ...***

SP: So now, this is February 13, 2003?

DS: Yes.

SP: Okay. So do you...

DS: Without doing anything to provoke it...

SP: Well, can I just... I want to ask you, and I want you to talk about it, it says (in the 2006 book you wrote, *The Second Comforter*), you wrote that ***“when your faith [is] in His ordinances is secure enough that seeing Him will produce no further conviction of His word, no greater confidence in Him and no additional confirmation than what you have already, you are prepared to receive Him”*** (*The Second Comforter*, Chapter 12: In the Ordinances Thereof, p. 266). And that's... ***You feel that was what was preparatory to having your face-to-face encounter with Jesus.***

DS: ***Yes, I think that is exactly what's required.*** Because if what you're doing is trying to ***find the Lord to have faith in Him***, I think you've got a struggle ahead of you before you're ever gonna get there. ***I had within me a conviction of the truthfulness of the whole of this, that the Scriptures coming alive had done something within me; the effort to obey the Lord***

had done something within me. I had had personal difficulties in life; I'd had tragedies in life—none of them had made me doubt and all of them had made me draw closer to and rely upon the Lord more. And I had the conviction that, without any question, He is real, His work is real, He is actually doing something to prepare the Earth for His return. That isn't limited to a handful of really faithful Mormons. That stirring is going on everywhere in the world, and people are feeling it. *It's an awakening that touches many people AND agitates many people; the tares and the wheat are separating from one another. And wheat—whether you find them in the Evangelical community or in Catholicism or in Islam—there are wheat growing everywhere, and there are tares everywhere, and the tares are becoming more militant and less caring and less godly. So, I knew that God existed, and I knew that He had taken note of me, and I did not need to feel the prints in His hands (like Thomas did) in order to say, “Our Lord has risen.”*

SP: Oh! Okay, so I just have to ask you, so would you describe this as a visitation or a visionary experience? When you say that you didn't HAVE to touch his palms, DID you? Did you... Were you afforded the opportunity to actually touch and feel the Savior like He would have had done in Third Nephi?

DS: Yeah, yes. And the answer is the initial encounter had as its very specific purpose... Umm, again, this is probably somewhat at odds with what I was saying before—but it was apocalyptic. The first encounter was what I would call right squarely in the tradition of Apocalypticism. And *its purpose was to orient me for purposes that would later unfold.* But it was abundantly clear to me... (And the encounter is now, actually, it's been canonized in a set of Scripture we call the Teachings and Commandments.) It has... That was the first encounter, but there have been others, and *the others have been tutorial. The purpose has not been to reassure me; the purpose has been to educate me.*

SP: Okay, so I'm really curious—because it's almost like you have a reverse encounter that people don't normally have with Jesus. In other words, you almost had like an encounter with Jesus of the book of Revelation—right?

DS: Yes.

SP: ...at the first encounter, and then your further encounters are almost like you're being taught by the Savior, like He would have been doing His earthly ministry.

DS: Right.

SP: And so, you have this opportunity to engage in conversation with Him. Do you... Are there times when He gives you a hug? Do you hug Him? Do you embrace Him? Do you feel Him? Have you had a chance to feel the prints, His handprints? And how tangential of an experience is this?

DS: Okay. I've told this to a few people; I guess there's no reason not to just tell it and have it out there. Well, the answer is, "Yes" to your questions. But let me talk to you about a singular intimate moment, okay? Almost everything...

While the Lord doesn't convey in communication in a way that vibrates the air, it's a higher form of communication that is abundantly more clear. It conveys thought itself, clarity itself, understanding itself, and it's left to you... ***You comprehend it, but it's left to you—if you want to—to convert it into English; it's left to you to explain it in words. It is bigger than and more inclusive than the words themselves.*** And so, it's not necessarily accurate to say, "Okay, He said this to me." He conveyed this to me, and I'm telling you what it was that got conveyed. So, understand that. And then ***second of all, there came this moment where, in a series of what I would call educational encounters—I had been tutored; I had been taught; I had been shown; I had experienced; I had witnessed things that helped me get my hands around things—there came this moment when, in the presence of the Lord, He reached out His hand, and He touched my eyes.***

SP: Okay!

DS: And when He touched my eyes... There are phrases in the Scriptures that... For example, Lehi says, "He saw and heard much." In the Pearl of Great Price, book of Moses, Moses encounters the Lord, and he describes it as having seen "the ends of the Earth and all the things that went on from the beginning to the end." And it's just a summary statement. ***Paul describes it as "seeing and hearing unspeakable things."*** And so, understand that Scriptures bear testimony of such things being shown. ***They don't give you, necessarily, an adequate preparation so that in encountering it, you can say, "Yeah, yeah, that's exactly what happened!" What happened: He***

touches my eyes, and everything (past, present, future) in a—the only word I can think of is—a cacophony. It's just vast, without beginning and end. It is a vast assortment. And it is not arranged chronologically. It is... The prophecies of Isaiah, as he's parsing through, *he will grab an event that occurred before his time, he will prophesy about things occurring in his time, and he will mix in things that will happen in the future in the same verse/in the same paragraph/in the same thought. And so, what Isaiah did—and Nephi copied the Isaiah prophecy and adopted it as his own—what Isaiah and Nephi did was to organize (what they got their hands around) thematically, so that the chronology is not anchored... We live in a linear world; it is unanchored from that. It is past, present, and future amalgamated into a singular statement. And so, the Lord, touching my eyes, this is happening, and to me...* I mean, I live the kind of life that every other human lives—*it's linear*. I used to be 9 years old, and then I was 10; and I used to be 30, and then I'm 31; my life happens chronologically. And when I think about my life, I look back upon my life, and it's always organized linearly and chronologically—*and this stuff is not*. And I mean, I, literally, I... This sounds so stupid, *I literally said to the Lord, “I can't take this in. You have to use words”* (Mormon-Book-Reviews_transcript.pdf p.11, emphasis added).

Apparently when a person is drawn through the veil and information is conveyed in a non-traditional manner it is difficult to translate the content and, in some cases, impossible to convert to the traditional mortal manner of speaking. It is “unspeakable” because of restrictions on content and differences in transitioning between communication mediums.

I experienced this form of communication when I was visited by my oldest brother in a dream. RanDee, my eldest brother, led a difficult life from the moment he was born. He had a nervous breakdown in his mid-twenties and was diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic. Over the next thirty-five years I attended competency hearings that committed RanDee to different mental health facilities. He often became agitated and aggressive in his younger years. His anger flashed to rage within seconds. His steely blue eyes reflected his unbridled anger, which often led him to provoke others to fight.

RanDee lived to the age of around 57. A chain smoker, his eventual cause of death was emphysema. I visited RanDee in Salt Lake once a week. He was in government subsidized housing that was the epitome of a “roach hotel.” In his later

years he had little energy for anger and became dismissive as soon as I met his needs. There was no appreciation, no gratitude and often rejection when I met with him. It was a thankless job, but I promised my father I would do it and I kept my promise. As thankless as it was, I didn't mind doing it. I shared good memories growing up with him and felt compassion for him trying to find peace and normalcy in his world that had little of either.

Several years after RanDee's passing I was sleeping. I dreamed I was in a white room that felt like a waiting room. I recalled a woman with a child sitting across from me. The room felt white and sterile.

A door opened and RanDee walked into the room as if he felt embarrassed, somewhat awkward. In the manner described previously, I felt his voice in my mind, but his lips didn't move. "They told me I could speak with you." He then asked for my forgiveness. I turned my head from him and stared at the floor, searching my thoughts to see if I felt anything towards RanDee that required forgiveness. For a few moments I was stricken by the fact I felt no animosity or bitterness at all. I was briefly consumed with the wonderful feeling that I felt no anger towards him. I turned to tell him as much only to see his back as he passed back through the door. I suspect he shared my thoughts and knew my feelings at the same moment I experienced them. Having received his answer, he returned to where he had come from, relieved from whatever burden of guilt he bore. I know I felt relieved to know there was nothing but love between us and I hope he felt joy and relief as well.

In the examples of the young man, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Denver Snuffer and my brother RanDee we see two different types of people. The young man and RanDee came to mortality with specific challenges for them to face and act as a test to prove those around them. For quite a while I wrestled with the issue of how the young man and RanDee's lives could be fair; let alone just. I'm not familiar with the details of the young man's life and the challenges faced by his parents and siblings, still, there are parallels. I was intimately aware of the struggles my brother experienced throughout his turbulent life. I was torn between the contrast of my blessed life and RanDee's perpetual struggle. Where was the mercy and justice of God?

The Linear View in Mortality

In discussing Autism, there is a spectrum of symptoms allowing the medical community to assign the level of conditions into general categories. Borrowing from that approach, we see a similar spectrum in the four examples previously discussed.

The young man and RanDee are at one extreme and Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and Denver Snuffer are at the opposite end of the continuum.

During preparation for speaking at my brother's graveside service, I was caught up in the unfairness of how he suffered through life. I recall one sobering conversation I had with him. In his early forties he worked enough to qualify for Social Security disability. The meager income was taken by the state to subsidize his living, medical and dental expenses. One day I jokingly said, "You've got it made." To which he replied, "Do you want to trade lives with me." I was happily married with four children and pursuing a career I loved. I had been incredibly blessed and what did RanDee have? I felt ashamed for broaching the subject, especially in jest.

Struggling to understand the injustice of our contrasting lives, it was increasingly difficult to understand God's mercy in RanDee's life as it related to my life.

From the mortal perspective, the young man and RanDee were at one end of the spectrum, an extreme end. In contrast, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and Denver Snuffer were at the opposite end of the spectrum, blessed incomprehensibly.

Struggling with a situation that transcended my understanding, my mind was drawn to the Book of Abraham and Abraham's account of pre-mortality. My understanding of these verses was greatly influenced by the following commentary included within brackets and added emphasis:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; [*i.e., all preexistent spirits*] and among all these there were many of **the noble and great ones**; [*i.e., a subset or smaller portion of the group.*]

And God saw **these souls** [*i.e., the smaller subset called "noble and great"*] that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, [*i.e., the subset "noble & great"*] and he said: **These** [*the subset*] I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they [*the subset*] were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; [*i.e., one of the subset called "noble and great"*] thou was chosen before thou wast born.

And there stood one among them [*i.e., one from among the subset called "noble and great"*] that was like unto God [*i.e., Christ as a preexistent spirit being*] and he [*Christ*] said unto those who were with him : **We** [*Christ and the "noble and great"*] will go down, for there is space there, and **we** [*i.e., Christ and the "noble and great"*] will

take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon **these** [*i.e., the rest of the preexistent spirits of mankind*] may dwell;

And **we will prove them** [*i.e., the rest of the preexistent spirits of mankind*] herewith, to see if **they** will do **all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them**: And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and **they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever**.

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered **like unto the Son of Man**: [*i.e., Christ*] Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him.

AND then the Lord said: Let **us** [*i.e., the “noble and great” as identified previously in verse 24 where it says “we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth” led by Christ*] go down. And **they** [*i.e., Christ and the “noble and great”*] went down at the beginning, and **they, that is the Gods**, [*i.e., Christ accompanied by the “noble and great”*] organized and formed the heavens and the earth. (Abraham 3:22-4:1; emphasis added, and inserted commentary in brackets.)

The added commentary identifies three distinct groups. There was Christ, who was one “likened unto God,” there are the “*noble and great*” who we learn are “*Gods*,” and “*these*,” *the rest* that are preexistent spirits.

The Noble and Great

Of the three categories of beings in pre-mortality, the second, or “*noble and great*” is generally misunderstood. We learn from Abraham’s account the “*noble and great*” assisted Christ in creating the earth. We see they also condescended with Christ into mortality. Because Abraham was told, “*Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born*,” it is presumed all noble and great entered mortality as prophets. But that conclusion may be too restrictive, too limiting in scope.⁵

⁵ “There’s a short story by Mark Twain I like a lot. It’s called Extract from Captain Stormfield’s Visit to Heaven. This is an American humorist’s telling about the afterlife that is largely based doctrinally on D&C Section 76, covers the same sort of differentiated afterlife, **but there people are recognized and respected for who they really are, not necessarily for what they achieved in this life**. Captain Stormfield wants to go meet the greatest general that ever

In addition to assisting Christ in the creation of the earth, the Savior said, “**We will go down**” and “**We will prove them.**” The work of proving the preexistent spirits was not limited to Christ but included the condescension of the “*noble and great*” who willingly sacrificed their Godly status to join in the Father’s work of bringing to pass the immortality and Eternal life of man on earth. Their condescension to mortality was accomplished at great sacrifice.⁶

The “*noble and great*” were known by God’s foreknowledge to have been faithful followers of Christ, foreordained⁷ into the Priesthood after the Order of the Son of

lived, and of course, since he’s in heaven, your wishes are all granted, so they’re taking Captain Stormfield to go see the greatest general that ever lived. On his way he’s wondering and guessing. He’s guessing about Alexander the Great, he’s guessing about Napoleon, he’s throwing out some of these names. I forget which one, it may have been Napoleon. He said, “Oh yeah, Napoleon is with him, he polishes his boots, he helps take care of his stuff.” Then he wants to know, “Well who is it then, who is the greatest general that ever lived?” and he’s given a name. I don’t remember the name, it was Fred something, just some name that means nothing to any of us, and Captain Stormfield says, “I’ve never heard of him. What battles did he win?” And the answer is, “Oh, he was never in a battle, he was a shoe cobbler in New England. **But if he’d ever commanded he would have been the greatest general that ever lived, and here we recognize people for what they really are, not for what they accomplished there.**” **What was in his heart was the greatest general that ever lived.** That’s who you want to be, the greatest Christian that ever lived” (Cursed-Denied Priesthood, Denver Snuffer, p.16, emphasis added).

⁶ “There is so much more that has to go on and be understood, if you are going to save yourself and any soul in this generation, in that kingdom [Celestial] which we claim we would like to inherit. **We claim we’d like to inherit it without any idea of the consequences of what it would take in order to ascend there. Or without any regard to the fact that, you don’t take one of the El [Gods, “noble and great”] and bring them down into mortality, pain-free. You say that the Son of God condescended to come and be here. And I say so did Michael [Adam], and so did Raphael [Enoch], and so did Gabriel [Noah]. Because coming down and condescending to be here on a rescue mission, by those who dwell in glory [Patriarchal Fathers], is an act of service and sacrifice, that we simply take for granted out of the abundance of our ignorance. You hardly comprehend the things of God. You simply do not know how great things God has done for us.** You remain content to allow conceit and foolishness to lead you from error to error without any fear you are losing your souls” (Priesthood, Denver Snuffer, Jr., p.33, emphasis added). “Thus they become...” These individuals have become something. The “high priests” about whom this material has been written **have been in the process of becoming something holy from before the foundation of the world. This is pre-earth or pre-mortal existence stuff. The history, or background leading up to finding a holy high priest in mortality is eons in the making. It goes back to before this world had been reorganized**” (Alma 13:9, LDS, Denver Snuffer Jr., blogpost, June 11, 2010, emphasis added)

⁷ “And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children. **And I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests after his Holy Order, which was after the Order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people. And those priests were ordained after the Order of his Son in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption. And this is the manner after which they were ordained: being called and prepared from the foundation of the world, according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works in the first place [pre-mortality], being left to choose good or evil; therefore they, having chosen good, and exercising exceeding great faith, are called with a holy calling — yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such. And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith,** while others would reject the spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds (while, **if it had not been for this, they might had as great privilege as their brethren — or in fine, in the first place [pre-mortality] they were on the same standing**

God prior to earth's existence. Having proven themselves over eons⁸ of time and numerous pre-mortal cycles⁹, God has proven them and they in turn are called to prove their brethren and sisters who are in earlier stages of ascension.

When reflecting on the “*noble and great*” our thoughts are generally drawn to prophets like Adam, Abraham, Moses or any number of prominent men in scripture. To focus solely on them is to overlook others of the noble and great who willingly came to mortality at their jeopardy and tremendous sacrifice. They came to teach what it means to suffer greatly by example and sacrifice for the benefit of others in their ascension.

We rightfully focus on Christ because His sacrifice for all mankind transcends all other sacrifices for the salvation of everyone. But surrounding us every day are those who set aside their godly stature for our service and benefit.

The world sees them as smitten and afflicted by God¹⁰, but the young man and RanDee's of the world endure extraordinary afflictions and deprivation in preparation

with their brethren — thus, this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son who was prepared), and thus, being called by this holy calling and ordained unto the High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest — this High Priesthood being after the Order of his Son, which Order was from the foundation of the world, or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity according to his foreknowledge of all things. Now they were ordained after this manner, being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the High Priesthood of the Holy Order — *which calling, and ordinance, and High Priesthood is without beginning or end; thus, they become high priests for ever after the Order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is.* Amen. (RE Alma 9:10, emphasis added).

⁸ *We are the offspring of heaven, and are capable of reuniting with heaven while mortal.* We also have the *opportunity, through eons of progression, to become as our Parents, the Gods”* (*The Restoration's Shattered Promises and Great Hope*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.18, emphasis added).

⁹ *“God has been at this a long time. Christ has, likewise, been involved for many repeated cycles of creation.* Moses was told: “by the word of my power have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And *worlds without number have I created*; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.” [Moses 1:32-33, RE Genesis 1:6] *It is endless and it is cyclical.* “For behold, *there are many worlds* that have passed away by the word of my power. *And there are many that now stand, innumerable are they unto man but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them* [Moses 1:35, RE Genesis 1:6]: *This is God's great work. It has been going through cycles of creation, fall, redemption, judgment and re-creation forever. It is endless.* The Lord told Moses just how vast this process has grown: “*The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works; neither to my words.*” [Moses 1:37-38, RE Genesis 1:6]; *This is a continual, endless cycle, worlds without end”* (*Christ- The Prototype of the Saved Man*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.41, emphasis added).

¹⁰ “. . . He is despised and rejected of men — a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our

for further ascension toward Christhood or through the Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. Christhood meaning, Christ is the prototype of the saved man and all, over eons and cycles of time are transformed into His express image and attributes as the Savior is transformed into the image of our Eternal Father.¹¹ This Priesthood is

sorrows, **yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted**. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; (RE Isaiah 19:2). When a man is ordained by God to the Priesthood After the Order of the Son of God, it is because he has demonstrated a willingness to walk as the Son of God walks. Through Sacrifice and obedience to God they willingly suffer the will of the Father in all things. The world sees them as “smitten” and “afflicted” but in the economy of God they are acknowledged as “*noble and great.*”

“And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the foreigners, women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain the first resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received the promises, God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings; for without sufferings they could not be made perfect**” (RE Hebrews 1:49, emphasis added).

¹¹ “This is from the 7th Lecture on Faith, paragraph 9, about Christ: “Where shall we find a saved being? for if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty **what all others must be in order to be saved**. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that **two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved**. We ask, then, where is the prototype? or where is the saved being? **We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, that he is a saved being**. And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved? the answer would be—**because he is a just and holy being; and if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else; for if it were possible for him to change, in the least** See also 3 Ne. 23: 14. 17 Alma 37: 12. 15 **degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority and glory, which constitute salvation; for salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him.**” When you read this language do not succumb to the temptation to gloss over it. **Do not think salvation consists of Christ magically applying ‘fairy dust’ to make us like Him. If Christ could “make” us like Him that would be Luciferian**. It would abrogate free will. It would save without respecting agency. We have the freedom to choose because without that we would not exist. Therefore, **to preserve our existence there cannot be any magic elevation of man. Rather, man must ascend by degrees and through experience to become like God. And Jesus Christ is the prototype who has proven this ascent is possible**” (Christ-The Prototype of the Saved Man, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.14, emphasis added).

“The Lectures [on Faith] were prepared five years into Joseph’s church ministry. It is clear he wanted to make sure the doctrine was correct. This is the “doctrine” he prepared for that first publication of the “Doctrine” & Covenants. Yet, despite that, we tend to rarely read this, and when we do it is not taken seriously. **If you are going to be saved, you must be “exactly,” you must be “precisely” what Christ is and “nothing else.” You! At the**

not the ordination given by an institution.¹² This ordination is only granted by the ratifying voice of God¹³ that each man or woman is accepted by Him as His son or daughter.¹⁴

moment when you are saved this is what you must be, "or else not be saved." Christ is the prototype and we must mirror Him. He proved God the Father's word by doing what the Father asked. This is how Christ identified Himself to the Nephites. He "suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning." (3 Ne. 11: 11.) Or, in other words, *Christ was obedient before this world was, and this world started in its creation after Christ was first qualified to redeem it*" (*Christ-The Prototype of the Saved Man*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.16, emphasis added).

¹² "But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." [This would be a very curious statement if your view of "this priesthood" is limited to the ordination you obtain through the agency of the Church, which establish what we call here a Melchizedek priesthood holder and an elder. *This is referring to nothing of the sort. This is dealing with the covenant established by God the Father, directly. If you think it applies to what the Church dispenses, then does that mean that when an elder drifts off into inactivity in the Church or apostasies from the Church then he is not going to have forgiveness of sins in this world or the world to come?! Of course it doesn't mean that at all. It's not talking about what goes on in the Church and its brotherhoods. It's not talking about receiving an ordination and participating in an Elders Quorum, or thank God, a High Priest group. It is talking about something much higher, more directly connected with God, and therefore more holy requiring that it be taken more seriously in fidelity to the One who sits upon the Throne*" (*Priesthood*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.6, emphasis added).

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"You can see it in the case of Jacob, Nephi's younger brother. Go to 2 Nephi 5:26 "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people." This is the brotherhood among the mortals. But if you go to Jacob chapter 1 and you look at verse 17, you see Jacob saying; "Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, *having first obtained mine errand from the Lord.*" *This is the second ordination, in which he joined in a brotherhood with the Lord, beyond the veil.* Jacob didn't go out to commence his ministry following Nephi's death, even to his own people over whom he had been consecrated as a priest, *until he had first obtained that second ordination*" (*Priesthood*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.14, emphasis added)

¹⁴ "And now these are the words which king Benjamin desired of them, and therefore, he said unto them, Ye have spoken the words that I desired, and *the covenant which ye have made is a righteous covenant.* And now, *because of the covenant which ye have made, ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you. For ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name, therefore ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.* And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free; there is no other name given whereby

This Life is the Time to Prepare to Meet God

Alma, a prophet in the Book of Mormon said:

“Therefore, ***this life became a probationary state, a time to prepare to meet God***, a time to prepare for that ***endless state*** which has been spoken of by us, which is ***after the resurrection of the dead***” (RE Alma 9:6, emphasis added).

This verse may have been misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is true “*this life*” is a probationary state, a time to “*prepare to meet God.*” Throughout most of my adult life this verse was interpreted to mean ***this*** earthly experience is the **only time** for our probation and preparation and after the resurrection our opportunity ceases. Thereafter we suffer or enjoy the consequences for the balance of eternity. Are there any mortals who live up to the standard of Christ, as the prototype of a saved man in this life?

If Christ is the prototype of the saved man, and if we all must become exactly, precisely what He is or not be saved, then the only way for that to be accomplished is for the grace of Christ to be magically sprinkled over us and we are miraculously transformed into His image after the resurrection. That assumption simplifies everything but leaves significant confusion in its wake.

Christ did not follow that example. The Father didn’t atone for Christ, by sprinkling magic fairy dust over Him, transforming Jesus into the image of the Father. Rather, Jesus progressed from grace to grace as a sinless man. Why did He require grace if He had no sin?

“And I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at the first, but received grace for grace. And he received not of the fullness at first, but continued from grace to grace until he received a fullness, and thus he was called, the Son of God, ***because he received not of the fullness at the first***” (RE T&C 93:4, emphasis added).

salvation cometh. Therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, ***all you that have entered the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.*** And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for ***he shall be called by the name of Christ***” (RE Mosiah 3:2, emphasis added).

Traditional understanding of grace suggests something miraculous and incomprehensible covers our sins through Christ's sacrifice. If that is the sole definition of grace, why did Christ, a sinless man, need grace to progress? If grace is inseparably connected with the Atonement of Jesus Christ, how did Jesus obtain it prior to Gethsemane? Or is it possible grace is something more than magic fairy dust? The Glossary of Gospel Terms defines grace as:

“The free, unmerited love and favor of God. Grace is a gift, *but the gift must be received. Only those willing to “receive” it merit grace.*¹⁵ It is “received” in the way the Lord ordained and in no other way. *There is no space between faith in Christ and behavior evidencing that faith.* There is no dichotomy between “grace” and “works” *because it is by one’s conduct that he or she merits grace.* Christ received grace *by the things He did. The manner by which each person receives grace is through keeping His commandments* [or by the things they do]. Grace – *or power to move closer to God- is also an increase of light.*¹⁶ *Light grows only as one moves*

¹⁵ “And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abides the law of a celestial kingdom, *for it fills the measure of its creation and transgresses not the law. Wherefore, it shall be sanctified.* Yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again and shall abide the power by which it is quickened. And the righteous shall inherit it, for notwithstanding they die, they also shall rise again, a spiritual body. *They who are of a celestial spirit shall receive the same body which was a natural body, even you shall receive your bodies. And your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.* You who are quickened by a portion of the Celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And they who are quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And also, they who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And they who remain, shall also be quickened. Nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, *to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.* For what does it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, *and he receive not the gift?* Behold, he rejoices not *in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift.* And again, verily I say unto you, *that which is governed by law is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same.* That which breaks a law and abides not by law, *but seeks to become a law unto itself, and wills to abide in sin,* and altogether abides in sin, *cannot be sanctified by law, neither of mercy, justice, or judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still*” (RE T&C 86:4-5, emphasis added).

¹⁶ “And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life, for *you shall live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatever is truth is light, and whatever is light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ. And the spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and the spirit enlightens every man through the world that hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father. And the Father teaches him of the covenant which the Father has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for yours only, but for the sake of the whole world*” (RE T&C 82:18, emphasis added).

*closer to it.*¹⁷ ***But man has choice, and he must elect to move closer to the light. If man receives the light from Him, he receives grace, and he becomes more like Him. He will be more gracious and patient with others . . .***” (RE *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Grace, p.671, emphasis added).

Grace, as a gift from God, is offered to us by Him but never by compulsion or confession alone. We accept grace from God when we obey His commandments as they are given. From pre-mortality to now, when we obey the light God offers, we obtain a blessing leading us closer to God. If we reject and disobey, the justice of God requires an opposing consequence. Disobedience brings negative consequences leading further from God. It may be an obvious consequence like an affliction, curse, or you simply withdraw further from God and increased enlightenment.¹⁸

Service and Sacrifice

The condescension of the “*noble and great*” is an act of service, sacrifice, and extraordinary valor. Simply acknowledging their sacrifice and service is to overlook the point. They are here to teach in precept and example. Prophets do both, but there are people sent who are “*noble and great*” who serve and sacrifice simply by “being” like the young man and RanDee.

The following statement discusses the importance of sacrifice and its relevance to our salvation.

¹⁷ “Verily I say unto you, he that is ***ordained of me*** and ***sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the spirit of truth***, does he preach it by the spirit of truth or some other way? And if by some other way, it is not of God. And again, he ***that receives the word of truth, does he receive it by the spirit of truth or some other way? If it be some other way, it is not of God.*** Therefore, why is it that you cannot understand and know ***that he that receives the word by the spirit of truth, receives it as it is preached by the spirit of truth?*** Wherefore, ***he that preaches and he that receives, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.*** And ***that which does not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light, and he that receives light and continues in God receives more light, and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day***” (RE T&C 36:4, emphasis added).

¹⁸ “Joseph Smith linked blessings with knowledge. ***He linked knowledge with obedience to laws. “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a law, irrevocably decreed in Heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated — and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”*** “If we want a blessing, we must find the law upon which the blessing is predicated, ***and then follow that law. If we do, we get the blessing.*** There is a majestic simplicity to this orderly procedure . . .” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Blessings, p.591, emphasis added).

“Well, The Lectures on Faith, this is lecture six, yeah, it’s the sixth lecture:

“*A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; [for] from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things.*” It’s through *the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God.* And then we get to this verse eight: “*It is [in] vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.*” What did the Prototype of the saved man offer in sacrifice? I mean, *we jump to the end of the story* and we point to Gethsemane and we point to the cross and we say, there it is, His life. *But He was the living sacrifice for many more years than the week that was spent coming in, confronting them in the temple, celebrating and implementing the sacrament, going into Gethsemane and suffering, being tried and crucified, being laid in a grave, and three days and three nights later arising from the grave. He spent some 30 plus years prior to that as the prototype of the saved man*” (*The Temple*, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.8-9), emphasis added).

The wisdom behind the system God instituted is profound in its simplicity. Those who are early in their ascension must be introduced to selfless sacrifice and service in order to develop sufficient faith and eventual perfection. We become more like God as we act like Him and He devotes His existence to bringing to pass the immortality and Eternal Life of His posterity.¹⁹ To fulfill this objective His posterity

¹⁹ “And it came to pass that Moses spoke unto the Lord, saying, Be merciful unto your servant, O God, and **tell me concerning this earth and the inhabitants thereof, and also the heavens**; and then your servant will be content. And the Lord God spoke unto Moses **of the heavens**, saying, These are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come. And there is no end to my works, neither my words. **For behold, this is my work and my glory: to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man.** And now Moses, my son, I will speak unto you **concerning this earth upon which you stand**, and you shall write the things which I shall speak. And **in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which you shall write, behold, I will raise up another like unto you, and they shall be had again among the**

must learn sacrifice by enduring personal challenges and sacrificing their lives for the benefit of others. That is what Christ did for all mankind and what the Father did for His Son.²⁰

Due to variations in our levels of progression, each person is sent to earth in circumstances that teach what they need in preparation for learning to endure future degrees of sacrifice necessary to obtain greater degrees of exaltation. Each level is associated with varying degrees of suffering and joy. The Lord's promise is we will be comforted and strengthened as we endure the challenges and joys of mortality. The Lord grants us varying degrees of His spirit according to our needs and our heed and diligence to what He offers us at each step of our progression.

For this system to accommodate everyone at each level, all are given opportunities to serve and be served. A child relies exclusively on their parents, siblings or grandparents during their formative years. As they grow in knowledge and experience, they are given greater agency and responsibility to make decisions regarding their lives. Eventually they reach adulthood and begin the process as a

children of men, among even as many as shall believe. These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men" (RE Genesis 1:7, emphasis added).

²⁰ After the meal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me above every thing else? He answered him, Yes, Lord. You know that I love you. He said to him, Take care of my lambs **as they are growing**. He asked him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me above every thing else? He said to Him, Yes, Lord you know that I love you. He said to him, Take care of my lambs **as they increase**. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me above every thing else? Peter was concerned because He asked him for a third time, Do you love me? And he said to Him, Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you. Jesus said to him, **Care for my lambs as they are added upon**. In the name of Father Ahman I tell you, **when you were progressing**, you dressed yourself, and **went where you chose to go**; but **as you approach the end of the path**, you will have to **let others stretch out your hands and likewise nail you, even if you plead to have the bitter cup removed. This He said to foretell the sacrificial death that is required for endless glory**. And then He added, **You must follow after me**" (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:18, emphasis added).

More than merely coming forth from the grave (although that is termed "resurrection," also); Joseph Smith more accurately referred to this **as an achievement following exaltation: "[Y]ou have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power (TPJS, 346–347).**" Arising from the grave does not mean one has "attained to the resurrection of the dead," nor holds the keys of resurrection. **No one will attain this until they, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until they can obtain the power to resurrect all that depends upon them. To "attain to the resurrection of the dead" requires one to have the power to resurrect not only themselves, but also those who are dependent on them. "This is what the prototype of the saved man did. This is Who we worship. This is who and what we must precisely and exactly become"** (A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Attain to the Resurrection of the Dead, p.582, emphasis added).

caregiver, rather than one who is cared for. In time, age and its effects on the physical body require us to rely on the compassion and resources of others as we pass through the twilight of our mortal lives.

Throughout this experience, God intends for us to draw nearer to Him. First, we learn to communicate with the Son through a veil and eventually the Savior extends His hand through the veil and draws us to His breast. He restores us to the original relationships we had prior to coming to earth.

Many “*noble and great*” arrive at the veil earlier than most and receive great comfort as they endure the suffering, deprivation and indignities they willingly experience in this life. It is preparation for greater sacrifices that lie ahead on the pathway to godliness. The great dividend for our investment in this life is learning to love those for whom we sacrifice and serve, even as they do the same for us. Our patience is born from empathizing with the suffering of others in relation to what we suffer and sacrifice. Those loving bonds seal us together and last throughout eternity.

We love whom we serve and have charity towards those who afflict us because we understand they will yet learn what we know because of our mortal experience. The struggles we endure provide the seed bed for the gift of charity. We suffer willingly and often unjustly for others, as Christ suffered for us.²¹ We have compassion for them as Christ shows compassion and forgiveness for us. All must learn to forgive because our forgiveness is required before He forgives us. We receive what we give, choosing compassion and understanding if afflicted unjustly as was the Savior of the world. Our choice is to extend charity to our fellow travelers or become accusers. Satan is an accuser. We cannot be sons and daughters of God and remain accusers of our brethren. We are who we emulate.

Summary

If God is all knowing and perfect in His attributes, why are His creations not perfect when they enter mortality? The answer is, they are. Perfect for the circumstance in which they are placed. For their benefit, and the benefit of others

²¹ “The Lord experienced all the horror and regret wicked men feel for their crimes ***when they finally see the truth***. He experienced the suffering of their victims whose righteous anger and natural resentment and disappointment ***must also be shed, and forgiveness given***, in order for them to find peace. ***He overcame them all. He descended below them all. He comprehends it all. And he knows how to bring peace to them all. He knows how to love others whether they are the one who has given offense or the one who is a victim of the offense***” (RE T&C 161:21, emphasis added). We must learn to do the same.

associated with them. Each situation offers the greatest opportunity for everyone's advancement. Regardless of the circumstance, God grants us all agency within the "sphere"²² in which we are placed, learning to choose between good and evil, godliness or ungodliness. Adapting and developing His attributes which embody perfection or not. No outcome is controlled or dictated. We advance or retreat from God according to our diligence and obedience within the circumstances where we are placed. Our diligence in keeping God's commandments determines how well we emulate the prototype of the saved man and become sanctified through the process or not.

The "*noble and great*" among us come in numerous shapes, sizes, deficiencies, capabilities, and accomplishments. They come as deformed or impaired infants, they walk among us as panhandlers and geniuses. Often, they appear "smitten, afflicted by God,"²³ but in the Eternal scheme of things they are "*noble and great,*" people like

²² "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. **All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise, there is no existence . . .**" (RE T&C 93:10, emphasis added).

²³ "And now I, Jacob, would speak somewhat concerning these words. For behold, the Lord hath shewn me that those who were at Jerusalem, from whence we came, have been slain and carried away captive; nevertheless, the Lord hath shewn unto me that they should return again. And he also hath shewn unto me that the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself unto them in the flesh. And after he should manifest himself, they should scourge him and crucify him, according to **the words of the angel** who spake it unto me. And after they have hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks against the Holy One of Israel, behold, the judgments of the Holy One of Israel shall come upon them. **And the day cometh that they shall be smitten and afflicted. Wherefore, after they are driven to and fro, for thus saith the angel, many shall be afflicted in the flesh, and shall not be suffered to perish because of the prayers of the faithful. They shall be scattered, and smitten, and hated; nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance**" (RE 2 Nephi 5:4, emphasis added).

"And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb, **that I should be his servant to bring Jacob again to him. Though Israel be not gathered,** yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that **thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles,** that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, **to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful.** Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, O isles of the sea, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee. And **I will preserve thee and give thee my servant for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth — to them that sit in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.** And I will make **all my mountains** [nations] a way, and my highways shall be exalted. And then, O house of Israel, behold, **these shall come from far,** and lo, these from the north, and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.

Christ, who appear lowly to the natural eye but act as God’s servants. “Rulers” in the eternal sense. They teach us how to become like Christ by struggling through the indignities of mortality they elect to endure. They offer us opportunities to act as the “*seed of Christ*”²⁴ if we ease their burdens as they receive what the Lord offers them and us.

Many of them come to know the mystery of godliness by enduring suffering, shortened or extended lives, waiting patiently for us to understand and join them in this eternal quest. The process restores the knowledge of God written in our pre-mortal souls on the parchment of our spirits.²⁵ Our responsibility is to learn compassion and gratitude for their mortal struggle for our benefit and theirs. The process leads both to Christ as we transform to attain His attributes and image.

Christ gave to the world a sign by which His disciples could be identified. Jesus said:

Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established; and break forth into singing, O mountains, **for they shall be smitten no more**. For **the Lord hath comforted his people and will have mercy upon his afflicted**. But behold, **Zion hath said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me — but he will shew that he hath not**. For can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet **will I not forget thee, O house of Israel**. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste against thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee” (RE 1 Nephi 6:7-8, emphasis added).

²⁴ And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you that when his soul has been made an offering for sin, **he shall see his seed**. And now what say ye? And **who shall be his seed?** Behold, I say unto you **that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord, I say unto you that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you that these are his seed, or they are heirs of the kingdom of God. For these are they whose sins he hath borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions**. And now, are they not his seed? Yea, and **are not the prophets, every one that has opened his mouth to prophesy that has not fallen into transgression? (I mean all the holy prophets ever since the world began.)** I say unto you **that they are his seed**. And these are they **who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation and said unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. And oh how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that art still publishing peace. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and for ever!** (RE Mosiah 8:8, emphasis added).

²⁵ “. . . Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because **that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light**, and **every man whose spirit receives not the light is under condemnation . . .**” (T&C 93:10, emphasis added).

“ . . . A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another — as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ***By this shall all men know that you are my disciples — if you have love one to another***” (RE John 9:5, emphasis added)

Until the love of God fills our hearts, we can never be certain we are disciples of Christ. That is what the world should look for when searching for Christ’s true disciples.

“The view into heaven is as thin as the razor’s edge. You must be perfectly perpendicular to this world to see through that narrow opening.”

Becoming perfectly aligned with the view into Heaven is a process involving grace. Christ’s ascension as described by John was progressing from grace to grace. He ascended in stairstep fashion, drawing ever nearer to our Father in Heaven. The perpendicular alignment is not physical. It is spiritual. What must be aligned is our hearts.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord — thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. ***Then*** shall you ***call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will listen unto you*** [converse with the Lord through the veil]. And you shall seek me and find me ***when you shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you*** [our hearts are perfectly aligned with His and we are drawn through the veil into His presence], ***says the Lord . . .***” (RE Jeremiah 11:1, emphasis added).

Grace for Grace, Grace to Grace

“And I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at the first, but received **grace for grace**. And he received not of the fullness at first, but continued from **grace to grace** until **he received a fullness**, and thus **he was**

*called, the Son of God, because he received not of the fullness at the first*²⁶
(RE T&C 93:4, emphasis added).

John refers to Jesus as the “Word” because Jesus literally conformed to every word from His Father. He was described by Abraham as “like unto God” when the Savior appeared among the “noble and great” in pre-mortality. He was “like unto God” because He was not given the assignment as “Son” from the Father at this point. He was therefore likened unto God, prior to the Father’s declaration of His Sonship. Our Lord’s preparation for this moment was accomplished over eons of time and numerous cycles of creation. His experience led Him to follow expressly and precisely all the Father’s commandments. Having proven true and faithful in obeying the Father’s direction, Jesus became the “Prototype of the Saved Man.”²⁶ The Savior’s obedience to all the Father’s commandments was the reason He taught His disciples:

“And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, he saith unto his disciples, *Enter ye in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it*; but wide is the gate and broad the way which leads to death, and many there be who travel therein until the night cometh, wherein no man can work” (RE 3 Nephi 13:2, emphasis added).

The reason for this admonition from the Savior was not to exercise control over His disciples. Their compliance with His admonition is based solely on the necessity for them to receive greater light and truth. To receive additional light, mankind must obey the principle it is associated with. Additional knowledge and light are synonyms for grace. As Christ obeyed the Father, He received greater understanding, greater light and grace in abundance. With additional light comes greater clarity and discernment.²⁷

Jesus said to His disciples:

“If you continue in *my word, then are you my disciples* indeed. And *you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (RE John 6:14, emphasis added).

²⁶ “We ask, then: Where is the prototype? Or where is the saved being? We conclude as to the answer of this question there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible that *it is Christ . . .*” (RE T&C 110, Lecture 7:9, emphasis added).

²⁷ “. . . And that which does not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light, and *he that receives light and continues in God receives more light, and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day*” (RE T&C 36:4, emphasis added).

It is necessary, essential for us to follow the teachings of Jesus with the exactness He followed the Father's directions. We must learn the truth and be made free. Consider the discussion of two great stumbling blocks the gentiles²⁸ placed in the pathway to their progression. The first, [pride] keeps them from not viewing the Savior as the prototype of the saved man and the second [many churches perpetuating the traditions of man]²⁹ is the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the grace of God in modern Christianity.

The Savior, as the prototype of the same man, is the pattern by which all may ascend to God when commandments are followed expressly. In Lecture 7 of the Lectures on Faith it states Jesus must be "precisely" what He is and nothing else. For us to be saved, we must be precisely as He is. That is a high, seemingly impossible bar to achieve in this life. While nothing is theoretically impossible, it is highly improbable any of us will attain perfection in mortality. Thus far there is only one person who attained that goal. However, some have come close, even very close.³⁰

²⁸ ". . . And the gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, **and have stumbled because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches**; nevertheless, **they put down the power and the miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor**. And there are many churches built up **which causeth envyings, and strifes, and malice; and there are also secret combinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the Devil. For he is the foundation of all these things**, yea, the foundation of murder and works of darkness; yea, and **he leadeth them** by the neck with a flaxen cord until he bindeth them with his strong cords for ever" (RE 2 Nephi 11:15, emphasis added).

²⁹ ". . . And that wicked one comes and takes away light and truth, **through disobedience**, from the children of men, and **because of the tradition of their fathers**. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (RE T&C 93:11, emphasis added).

³⁰ "Christ defined Himself as the fulfillment of God's commandments. When introducing Himself to the Nephites He explained, "behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the **which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning**." (3 Ne. 11: 11, emphasis added.) He is glorious and worthy of worship, possessing powers, principalities, dominions, kingdoms and thrones **because He did what the Father commanded Him to do. The effect of obeying the Father was to fill Him with light and truth. By doing what the Father commands, anyone, including you, can qualify to receive the same things. Christ was unique in that He alone has done it perfectly. Because of Him, however, we can do it imperfectly and be forgiven of our sins and errors. His perfection in this undertaking allows us to become a perfect similarity, through His Atonement**. There is no magic, though. **There is nothing given to us effortlessly**. Christ paid the price to allow us to repent. **But it is up to each person to choose for themselves the amount of truth and light they are willing to receive. That light and truth you are willing to receive is dependent upon your obedience**. How much light and truth are you willing to receive?" (Jr. Snuffer, Denver C. The Second Comforter: Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil (pp. 294-295), emphasis added). Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition.

"And now behold, after ye have tasted this light, is your knowledge perfect? Behold, I say unto you, **no**; neither must ye lay aside your faith, **for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed, that ye might try the experiment to know if the seed was good. And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say, Let us nourish**

Jesus lived a perfect life on this earth, but Jesus was a product of numerous cycles of experience prior to coming to earth.³¹ His Atonement for our sins makes the

it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care, it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit. But if ye neglect the tree and take no thought for its nourishment, behold, it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root, it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out. ***Now this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable, but it is because your ground is barren and ye will not nourish the tree; therefore, ye cannot have the fruit thereof.*** And thus it is: ***if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life. But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith, with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold, it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life. And because of your diligence, and your faith, and your patience with the word, in nourishing it that it may take root in you, behold, by and by, ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure. And ye shall feast upon this fruit, even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst. Then, my brethren, ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you***” (RE Alma 16:30, emphasis added).

“Now as I said concerning the Holy Order, or this High Priesthood, ***there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God.*** And it was on account of ***their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish.*** Therefore, 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, an exceeding great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.*** And now, my brethren, I would that ***ye should humble yourselves before God and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest. Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek,*** who was also a high priest after this same Order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the High Priesthood for ever” (RE Alma 10:1, emphasis added).

“And again, verily I say unto you, and ***I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you.*** For ***he that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is least and the servant of all. Wherefore, he is possessor of all things, for all things are subject unto him both in Heaven and on the earth: the life and the light, the spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son. But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin. And if you are purified and cleansed from all sin, you shall ask whatever you will in the name of Jesus, and it shall be done.*** But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask” (RE T&C 36:5, emphasis added).

³¹ “[John bore record of what he saw about our Lord ***before the Lord entered this world.***] ***This describes what the Lord did before this world was organized. He went from grace to grace, until He was “called the Son of God.”*** He experienced ***a long period of development before entering this world as its Savior.*** Through stages of development, ***He attained the grace to be “called the Son of God.” This is the prototype of the saved man; this is exactly what we must be or else not be saved.*** These are the first principles of the gospel on which we focus to be able to understand Who to worship, and how to worship Him. ***As long as we are in the flesh, we have the capacity to offer a sacrifice to God. We are in this ideal condition to develop faith in Him.*** This could not be done living in His presence. We will not return to His presence ***until we first develop that faith.*** We face difficulties here to allow us to ***struggle through a veil to acquire faith.*** This creation is an ideal place to see the sharp contrast between good and evil. ***It is a testing or proving ground.*** That is exactly why we are here. This is a glorious opportunity. We

same outcome possible for us over numerous cycles as well. Therein lies our hope for transformation and perfection. Some have sufficient experience to move forward dramatically due to their diligence in seeking grace, light and truth. Others advance more slowly as their development is tied to their lack of heed and diligence to the prototype of the saved man.³² The sooner we learn agency is accepting responsibility for our own salvation, the sooner we conform to the prototype of a saved man.

Jesus was strictly obedient to the commandments given Him by the Father. We, in turn, must learn to follow the Savior's commandments with the same attention and diligence to detail. We may not be close to His level of obedience now, but we are given the assurance if we give diligent heed to His teachings³³, we will know the truth and be made free by the knowledge or "grace" we receive through the process.

wanted it and shouted for joy at the idea of coming here to experience this veil of flesh. ***Salvation is free and offered to us all***" (Snuffer, Denver. Preserving the Restoration, p.309, Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition, emphasis added).

³² "All great truths are simple. Nephi assured us (as we covered earlier), ***God gives us no commandments unless He prepares a way for us to obey them. So, God must have provided a way for us to accomplish what He commands of us. The answer may seem at first superficial. It is not.*** This process is not a single giant step. ***It is many small steps. When explaining the process of exaltation, Joseph stated you grow into exaltation: "from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory."*** (DHC 6: 306.) ***In that same talk he said, "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."*** (Id., p. 306–307.) ***Here again, Joseph is connecting growth to knowledge and obedience. Again he is making this process openly democratic and universally applicable. And he is telling us this is a gradual process of increasing obedience in conformity to increasing knowledge. So how, then, do the small steps leading to the growth in light and truth begin? The beginning of the answer lies in Church [all] service.*** All of those irritating, sometimes grating things asked of you because you are a member of the Church ***are opportunities for sacrifice.*** The callings we receive, the home teaching and visiting teaching assignments we are given, and all the troubles and difficulties which come from holding a calling and ***serving others are opportunities for sacrifice. They are gifts from God, given as a part of His program for our exaltation. There is a genius to this program, and God is behind it.*** He offers to us the beginning of learning right inside His Church. ***Of course, it should not stop there, as we will presently see. To be most meaningful, sacrifice by one person should bless and benefit another person.*** When Isaiah taught ***the highest principles and aspirations of the law of the fast, he linked it to blessing others***" (Jr. Snuffer, Denver C. The Second Comforter: Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil (pp. 189-190) emphasis added, Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition).

³³ "And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, ***to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life, for you shall live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatever is truth is light, and whatever is light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ.*** And the spirit gives light to ***every man that comes into the world, and the spirit enlightens every man through the world that hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father.*** And the Father teaches him of the covenant which the Father has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for yours only, but for the sake of the whole world.

In contemporary Christianity, the Savior's Atonement has been reduced to the equivalent of magic fairy dust and a belief that mystically and magically we are forgiven and miraculously transformed. We lose our sinful nature and become incomprehensibly cleansed and sanctified in a moment confession and contrition. It can happen in that short a time of our hearts are right, but more is required. There are elements of the process we fall short comprehending, but it is less magic or mysticism and more due to our ignorance. Ignorance of what God's grace is and how it is imparted. The Savior said if we do His will, we will know the doctrine and the truth. Coming to "know" something suggests a learning process. We move from a state of ignorance and innocence to knowledge and empowerment. That is the process of progressing from *grace for grace* and *grace to grace*.

That is why the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the principle:

"And it shall come to pass that if you are faithful, you shall receive the fullness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that *you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship*, that you may come unto the Father *in my name*, and *in due time receive of his fullness, for if you keep my commandments, you shall receive of his fullness and be glorified in me as I am glorified in the Father. Therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace*" (RE T&C 93:7, emphasis added).

The Atonement of Jesus Christ extends to us the opportunity to receive grace, [knowledge, intelligence, light, truth]³⁴ until our knowledge is sufficient to save

And the whole world lies in sin and groans under darkness and *under the bondage of sin, and by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me, for whoever comes not unto me is under the bondage of sin. And whoever receives not my voice is not acquainted with my voice and is not of me. And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groans under sin and darkness, even now*" (RE T&C 82:18-19, emphasis added).

³⁴ "... Christ participated in the ordinance of the atonement *to acquire two things, the first of which is knowledge* (see Isaiah 19:2). *It is through His knowledge that He is able to justify many. This knowledge was acquired through His suffering the pains of all mankind, which allowed Him to know exactly what weaknesses afflict mankind and how to overcome them. This allows Him to succor, relieve, and teach mankind how to overcome every form of guilt, affliction, and weakness (see Alma 5:3). This knowledge was gained by suffering guilt and remorse for sins He had not committed, exactly as if He were the one who perpetrated them.* He performed this great burden *in the presence of His Father*, who would never leave Him, even in His hour of temptation, despite the fact that all His followers would abandon Him (see John 9:18). *When He suffered the guilt of all mankind, it was necessary for His Father to draw near to Him (see Luke 13:9), because it was impossible for Christ to know how to redeem mankind from the guilt and shame of sin unless He experienced the pain of uncleanness before God the Father, just as mankind will do if they are unclean in the day of judgment* (see Mormon 4:6). Unlike all of mankind, however, *Christ knows how to overcome this shame, because He has*

ourselves.³⁵ Eventually, following many cycles of increased light, also saving a creation of our making that relies upon us.³⁶

“Christ defined Himself as the fulfillment of God’s commandments. When introducing Himself to the Nephites He explained, “behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup

done so. Secondly, Christ acquired the keys of death and hell by suffering, reconciling, dying, rising, and reuniting with the Father (see Revelation 1:6). Because the keys of death and hell belong to Him, He has the power of forgiveness. He can forgive all men all offenses, but He requires them to forgive others (see T&C 51:3). If they fail to forgive others, they cannot be forgiven (see Matthew 3:30).

Mankind does not move from a state of evil to redemption by Christ’s sacrifice alone. *It is required for them to follow Him (see John 6:29). They follow Him when they allow Him to succor them, to impart knowledge to them, and when they forgive others through His knowledge gained from the atonement. Through the keys of death and hell, Christ’s atonement cleanses them from errors, from failings, and from deliberate wrong choices. He provides cleansing from those failings. But His atonement does not change their character unless they follow Him.* The atonement, if properly acted upon, *frees them to develop character like His, unencumbered by the guilt of what they’ve failed to do. He removes guilt. But developing character like His is mankind’s responsibility. They cannot be passive and obtain what He offers. They are required to actively pursue the redemption they seek from Him. When the sin is removed from them, they are free to pursue virtue without the crippling effects of remorse which He removed (see Alma 14:7).* When freed from the guilt of sin, the past mistakes no longer haunt them. Their sins are no longer remembered by the Lord, and *they are free to confess and forsake them (see T&C 45:9).* The reason they can publicly confess their sins is because *they are no longer a part of them.* The sin does not define them. *They have chosen to follow Him into a new life . . .” (A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Atonement, pp. 580-581, emphasis added).*

³⁵ “My son, if you will receive my words and hide my commandments with you, so that *you incline your ear unto wisdom and apply your heart to understanding, yea, if you cry after knowledge and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, then shall you understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God;* for the Lord gives wisdom, out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous, he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keeps the paths of judgment and preserves the way of his saints. *Then shall you understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea, every good path” (RE Proverbs 1:5, emphasis added).*

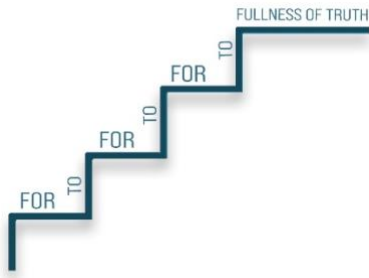
³⁶ “. . . Lectures on Faith identifies Christ as “the prototype of the saved man.” Lecture 7 focuses attention on Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. But the lecture extends the requirements met by Jesus Christ *to also apply for every saved man. In other words, for any man to be saved they must “attain to the resurrection,” like Christ.* Shifting attention for a moment from Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Savior to His Mother, we could acknowledge Her as “the prototype of the saved woman.” In other words, could we consider what She did a Divine pattern to be followed by women? “Attaining to the resurrection” does not mean merely being resurrected from the grave. *We must conquer death: But even when we rise from the grave, we will still not have “attained to the resurrection of the dead” nor hold the keys of resurrection.* No one will *until they, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until they can obtain the power to resurrect all that depends upon them. For us “to attain to the resurrection of the dead” requires us to have the power to resurrect, not only ourselves, but also those who are dependent on us. This is what the prototype of the saved man did.* This is Who we worship. *This is who and what we must precisely and exactly become . . .” (Our Divine Parents, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.18-19, emphasis added).*

which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the ***which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.***” (3 Ne. 11: 11, emphasis added.) He is glorious and worthy of worship, possessing powers, principalities, dominions, kingdoms and thrones ***because He did what the Father commanded Him to do. The effect of obeying the Father was to fill Him with light and truth. By doing what the Father commands, anyone, including you, can qualify to receive the same things. Christ was unique in that He alone has done it perfectly. Because of Him, however, we can do it imperfectly and be forgiven of our sins and errors. His perfection in this undertaking allows us to become a perfect similarity, through His Atonement.*** There is no magic, though. ***There is nothing given to us effortlessly.*** Christ paid the price to allow us to repent. ***But it is up to each person to choose for themselves the amount of truth and light they are willing to receive. That light and truth you are willing to receive is dependent upon your obedience.*** How much light and truth are you willing to receive?” (Jr. Snuffer, Denver C. *The Second Comforter: Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil* (pp. 294-295). Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition)

Following Christ’s example, we begin the process by extending grace to others through forgiveness and patience.³⁷ Grace for grace.

³⁷ For behold, ***the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again, for according to his works shall his wages be. Therefore, he that smiteth shall be smitten again of the Lord.*** Behold what the scripture says: ***Man shall not smite, neither shall he judge, for judgment is mine, saith the Lord, and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay.*** And he that shall breathe out wrath and strifes against the work of the Lord and against the covenant people of the Lord, who are the house of Israel, and shall say, We will destroy the work of the Lord and the Lord will not remember his covenant which he hath made unto the house of Israel, the same is in danger to be hewn down and cast into the fire. For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on until all his promises shall be fulfilled” (RE Mormon 4:3, emphasis added).

“Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people: ***Judge not unrighteously, that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again***” (RE Matthew 3:40, emphasis added).



The process commences as we show patience and forgiveness to those with whom we associate. It begins with pleading with the Lord for our own salvation and after that is obtained personally, it extends outward to our interactions with family, extended family, friends and associates. And lastly, concludes by forgiving and seeking the salvation of our enemies and those who “*despitefully*” use us.³⁸

³⁸ “Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forest, and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints sunk deep into my heart; and my soul hungered, **and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul. And all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me, saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee and thou shalt be Blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.** And I said, Lord, how is it done? And he said unto me, **Because of thy faith in Christ**, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh. Wherefore, go to, **thy faith hath made thee whole.**

Now it came to pass that when I had heard these words, **I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them.** And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, **the voice of the Lord came into my mind again**, saying, **I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. I have given unto them this land, and it is a holy land; and I curse it not, save it be for the cause of iniquity. Wherefore, I will visit thy brethren according as I have said, and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads.** And after I, Enos, had heard these words, **my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord. And I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren the Lamanites**” (RE Enos 1:1-2, emphasis added).

“And as I partook of the fruit thereof, it filled my soul with exceeding great joy; wherefore, **I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also, for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit.** And as I cast my eyes around about, that perhaps I might discover my family also . . .” (RE 1 Nephi 2:9, emphasis added).

“And behold, it is written also that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but behold, **I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven**, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good . . .” (RE 3 Nephi 5:31, emphasis added).

This is the mystery of godliness. It is mysterious because we understand the outcome of the process but lack understanding the mechanics of how the Atonement of Christ transforms weak individuals³⁹ into beings possessing godly attributes. Perhaps the greatest power is the knowledge and foresight to understand the enormous potential of those you desire to save and how to facilitate it. Built on a foundation of charity or the pure love of Christ and the Father. That is the key to establishing a world worth preserving indefinitely. Ultimately, when God's children ascend to His presence, God and His creation share immeasurable joy. *“Men are that they might have joy.”*⁴⁰

We qualify for grace [knowledge and edification]⁴¹ as we offer it to others. Giving grace for grace is a reciprocal act in God's economy.⁴² What you give fulfills a

³⁹ “And it came to pass that Moses looked and beheld the world upon which he was created. And as Moses beheld the world, and the ends thereof, **and all the children of men who are and who were created, of the same he greatly marveled and wondered.** And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon him, **and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.** And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before he did again receive his natural strength like unto man. And he said unto himself, **Now for this once I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.** But now **my eyes have beheld God — but not my natural eyes, but my spiritual, for my natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in his presence.** But his glory was upon me and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him” (RE Genesis 1:2, emphasis added).

⁴⁰ “. . . **Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy.** And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the Fall. **And because that they are redeemed from the Fall, they have become free for ever — knowing good from evil — to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh, and all things are given them which are expedient unto man.** And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death according to the captivity and power of the Devil, for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself . . .” (RE 2 Nephi 1:10, emphasis added).

⁴¹ “Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the spirit of truth, does he preach it by the spirit of truth or some other way? And if by some other way, it is not of God. And again, he that receives the word of truth, does he receive it by the spirit of truth or some other way? If it be some other way, it is not of God. Therefore, **why is it that you cannot understand and know that he that receives the word by the spirit of truth, receives it as it is preached by the spirit of truth? Wherefore, he that preaches and he that receives, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which does not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is light, and he that receives light and continues in God receives more light, and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day**” (RE T&C 36:4, emphasis added).

⁴² “Cast your bread upon the waters, for **you shall find it after many days**” (RE Ecclesiastes 1:53, emphasis added).

“No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood; **only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall**

need for the recipient and returns to you in God's own wisdom and time. This is the horizontal tread or "run" on the stairstep of ascension.

The vertical "rise" on the stairstep is "grace to grace." The grace, or knowledge, light, truth elevates us and moves us higher in our ascent toward godliness and God. It leads to God, even the Father and a covenant adoption and relationship with Him.⁴³ We become His sons and daughters because we are transformed into His image (or Heavenly Mother's image for women) and share in

Their godly attributes. Our conduct testifies we are Their children because we act as They would.⁴⁴

greatly enlarge the soul; without hypocrisy and without guile; reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the holy ghost, and then showing forth afterward an increase of love toward him whom you have reproved (lest he esteem you to be his enemy), that he may know that your faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death; your bowels also being full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith; and virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly. Then shall your confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrines of the Priesthood shall distill upon your soul as the dews from heaven. The holy ghost shall be your constant companion, and your scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth, and your dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto you for ever and ever" (RE T&C 139:6, emphasis added).

⁴³ And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, *to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life, for you shall live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God.* For *the word of the Lord is truth*, and whatever is *truth is light*, and whatever is *light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ.* And *the spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and the spirit enlightens every man through the world that hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father.* And *the Father teaches him of the covenant* which the Father has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for yours only, but for the sake of the whole world.

And the whole world lies in sin and groans under darkness and under the bondage of sin, and *by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me, for whoever comes not unto me is under the bondage of sin.* And whoever receives not my voice *is not acquainted with my voice* and is not of me. And *by this you may know the righteous from the wicked*, and that the whole world groans under sin and darkness, even now (RE T&C 82:18-19, emphasis added).

⁴⁴ "If the Son sets you free from sin, you are free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you conspire to kill me because my teachings have no place within you. *I teach you what the Father has shown to me while I was in his presence*, and you follow the teaching of your father. They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus replied to them, *If you were really Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.* But instead you plan to kill me. And why do you plan to kill me: *I am a man that has only told you the truth that I have heard from the Most High God;* Abraham would never do such a thing. *You follow the example of your real father.* Then they said to him, You are the product of extramarital fornication involving an unknown number of men, and we are not. We have one Father, even God. Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me, for *I am sent by and represent God. I am not speaking my own words or pursuing my own agenda, but the Father's words and agenda.* Why do you fail to comprehend my words? *Your refusal to hearken and submit to my teachings makes you deaf indeed. Your father is the accuser, and you share the envy and rebellion of your father.* He was a rebellious destroyer from the beginning, and fought against the truth, because he prefers lies.

God loves all His children equally with patient regard for the level where they currently stand. The reality is, some of his children have been at this longer and experienced greater growth and maturity than others.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, God comprehends the potential and value of all His children and desires all to overcome the fall and return to His presence, when they're prepared. They must be cleansed prior entering His presence to endure it.

The cleansing process is performed by grace for grace and then grace to grace.⁴⁶ Each of us, whether noble and great or "*these*" have shared and do share mortality with one another. Together, God establishes a mutually beneficial way to lift one another as we collectively ascend grace for grace, and grace to grace.

As I conclude this paper, I continue reflecting on the hypothesis that the noble and great are among us in various impaired, imperfect conditions. I have a grandson who recently returned home after a visit to our home. Hawkin's is an example of someone who exemplifies noble and great attributes.

Prior to arriving at our home, Chelsey, my daughter in law sent a video of Hawkins competing in a soccer match. We are all surprised by how competitively Hawkins played soccer. Kids with more sophisticated skills were frequently overcome by Hawkin's ability to focus on his objective of controlling the ball and scoring. Both of Hawkin's parents are excellent athletes and competitive at soccer. When discussing

When he spreads a lie, he advances his agenda. He is the source of deceit in this fallen world. And because I am the Source of truth, you are unable to believe me. Which of you can truthfully show that I have missed the mark? And if I teach the truth, why do you refuse to believe me? ***Everyone who follows the Most High God hearkens to God's words. Because you do not follow the Most High God, you cannot hear him***" (RE T&C 171, *The Testimony of Saint John* 6:19, emphasis added).

⁴⁵ And finding there was greater happiness, and peace, and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same. ***Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God,*** I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers. It was conferred upon me from the Fathers: it came down from the Fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or first Father) through the Fathers unto me. ***I sought for my appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the Fathers concerning the seed***" (RE T&C 145, Abraham 1:1, emphasis added).

⁴⁶ The staircase illustration and concept of explaining grace for grace, grace to grace was introduced to me from the teachings of Wes Orton by his daughter. Wes, now deceased, was a retired Institute instructor and devout man who was committed to the continuing Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although I've not met Wes, I've been the beneficiary of many of his teachings vicariously through his daughter, Juli Rees who continues his legacy of faith and obedience to Christ and the Restoration.

Hawk's inherent talent, our focus was on his competitive abilities. The whole family gushed over how well He competes.

As we sat at the table eating a meal, Hawkins was oblivious to the compliments and praise. In a moment of great clarity for me, one of Hawkins' uncles asked, "Hawkin's what was your favorite part of playing soccer?" Hawkins responded, "I like helping players up when they fall down." At that moment I recalled Hawk in hot pursuit of the ball when a player on the opposing team fell. Without hesitation Hawk stopped his pursuit, reached down to the fallen player and lifted him to his feet. I remembered seeing these events on the video and thinking, "He's got to learn to keep up his pursuit of the ball." Little did I know that Hawk's kindness to that competitor was the act that mattered most to him. It was then I realized that a lifetime of playing competitive sports had overshadowed the great lesson Hawk learned at a young age. It was then I realized how a young boy was far more advanced than I, one with a lifetime of experience. Hawkins, in the economy of God, truly is both noble and great.