As ripples on a pond, we are cast off into a stream of revelation and carried along in the quickening currents of direct experience with God.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume One Table of Contents</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume Two Table of Contents</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume Three Table of Contents</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume Four Table of Contents</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical Guide to Essays</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of Essays</td>
<td>1-435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I have attributed quotations to original authors whenever possible, as well as when I have editorialized the thoughts expressed by others. In many cases, however, the language in these essays will naturally reflect the teachings of leaders in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Of course, I alone am responsible for the content of these volumes. I hope my interpretation of principles of the Gospel will cultivate your interest to dig deeper into their themes woven into the tapestry of these essays. My only goal is to help you to expand your insights into the foundation truths that are the celestial guideposts embedded within the doctrines of the kingdom.

The list of those who have contributed to these essays is endless. Every teacher, student, classmate, business associate, friend, mentor, family member, priesthood and relief society brother, sister, or leader with whom I have come in contact has influenced me, just as the print and audiovisual media have moved me in equally positive ways.

Well did the poet teach: “No man is an island, entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were. Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.” (John Donne).

The Spirit often prompts me to remember the insight of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who wrote: “Earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush with the fire of God. But only those who see take off their shoes. The rest sit around picking blackberries.”

If some of the themes within these essays seem frivolous, please forgive me and remember that I have tried to govern myself by this maxim: “Live to learn, learn to love, and love to live.”
Preface

I have learned to love the scriptures, and I often think of St. Hilary, who wrote: “Scripture consists not in what we read, but in what we understand.” In these essays, I have consistently tried to find scriptural confirmation as my thoughts have ranged over a wide variety of subjects. It has been exciting to discover that the ideas swirling around inside my head can generally be anchored to and find relevance in scriptures that give me a sense of comfort, coherence, consolation, and constancy. Every time an idea explodes in my brain, it causes me to stop and think: “Somewhere in this, there is a new essay hiding!” Although on a much smaller scale, I feel as Albert Einstein must have when the mathematical equivalents to scripture study crystallized in the maze of his cerebral cortex and he said of the experience: “A storm broke loose in my mind.”

I believe the Spirit has the generative power to energize, vitalize, and quicken our axons and dendrites and craft a neural environment that stimulates creative thought. Those who have experienced the illumination of the Spirit know what Einstein meant when he said: “A splendid light dawned on me.” My challenge has been to learn how to enlist the aid of the Holy Ghost to assist in understanding, whenever and however I process the world around me.

Every time I proofed an essay (and I did this many times) I found myself scribbling additional notes in the margins and thinking to myself, “Why didn’t I see that before.” That is precisely what I hope will be your experience when you read my essays, and that in the process you will be prompted by the Spirit to be led in directions that will later prove to be worthwhile.

I would expect that after you have read these essays you will be uniquely impacted and touched differently each time you re-visit them. When I am long-gone, perhaps the considerable thought that went into their production will generate a palpable bond between us that will span the years separating us, and the gulf that then divides us will be bridged by our shared energies to establish the foundation for an eventual joyous reunion.

One of the reasons why I am somewhat preoccupied with writing essays is that I enjoy the rush of endorphins when I uncover wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, and even hidden treasures. The doctrinal themes embedded within each essay are pearls that I have not been able to discern after only a cursory glance. I hope that within these refrains you will find harmonic melodies that catalyze your own quest for greater understanding. I have enjoyed this process and heartily recommend it to you.

I had the opportunity to visit the Holy Land many years ago. We stopped, too briefly, at Qumran. There, the Dead Sea Covenanters had lived, and in the ruins of their library, I was able to pause and reflect upon their Eleventh Hymn that had been recovered from scrolls hidden within caves high above their community. “Behold, for mine own part I have reached the intervision,” it read, “and through the spirit thou has placed within me, come to know Thee, my God.” In a similar fashion, Moses wrote: “But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, 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.” (Moses 1:11).

I am continually reminded of Nephi’s counsel to press forward with complete dedication
and steadfastness or confidence and a firm determination in Christ, having a perfect
brightness of hope or perfect faith, and charity or a love of God and of all men. If
we do this, feasting upon the word of Christ, or receiving strength and nourishment
from the scriptures, and endure to the end in righteousness, we shall have eternal
life, which is the greatest of God’s gifts. (2 Nephi 31:20).

With this in mind, and against the backdrop of the scriptures, I extend to you the
invitation to enjoy these essays.
Introduction

These essays are arranged alphabetically (and not topically) beginning with the first volume and ending with the last. The table of contents at the beginning of each volume contains the same comprehensive list of all the essays, referenced by volume and page number to make it easier to find a topic.

The essays are random in their subject matter and sequentially follow no particular pattern. Most are religious in nature, while some are more philosophical, several are theoretical, a few are serendipitous, and one or two are whimsical. If any seem indecipherable, I invite you to recall Albert Einstein’s observation: “That which is impenetrable to us really exists. Behind the secrets remains something subtle, intangible, and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion.” My own faith offers the promise of an understanding of some of the very things that one of the greatest minds of the Twentieth Century found “subtle, intangible, and inexplicable.” Quite simply, these essays do more than scratch the surface of his inquiry; within the context of my religious heritage, they reach beyond the math and plumb the depths and measure the breadth of my understanding of our place in the cosmos.

The various topics were conceived in the same white-hot crucible of thought that is found within each of us, fueled by 10 - 20 billion cerebral cortical neurons, each with 60 dendrites and axons making 60 – 240 trillion interconnections. One of the titles for an essay still under construction is “Before I Lose My Mind.” Since eighty-five thousand irreplaceable neurons in our brains die every day, (31 million per year) I'd better get busy. I'll try to remember that the best way to arouse my creative expression is to read myself full, think myself straight, pray myself hot, and let myself go! Then, I can let nature caper.

Numerous essays were generated by “What if...?” questions, and many germinated in conversations with family and friends and during Church meetings when creative juices were flowing. Current events stimulated some, the observation of both disciplined and egregious behavior prompted others, and cultural norms and excesses provoked more than a few. Just as a chef might throw a number of ingredients into a “slow cooker” and let them simmer for hours on the stove, some of these essays found shape and substance over time as they were nurtured in the subconscious recesses of my mind. The reduction sauce of others was the product of the distillation of weeks, months, and even years of contemplation, and yet, now and then, one would quickly sizzle into existence as if the ideas had been thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.

Whereas Einstein said: “A storm broke loose in my mind” when he recalled the thought processes leading to equations that defined the universe, my own experiences were generally more like the whispers of a gentle breeze. When Handel created “The Messiah” in just 24 days, (259 pages of musical score) the notes came to him so quickly that he could barely keep up as he scratched out the oratorio on whatever paper was handy. After he had written the “Hallelujah Chorus” in a fervor of divine inspiration, he exclaimed that he had “seen all heaven before him.” At the end of the manuscript, in acknowledgement of his own puny efforts, he wrote the letters “SDG” – Soli Deo Gloria / “To God alone the glory.” On a much smaller scale, we have all had similar experiences with light and knowledge, and I was permitted on more than a few occasions during the genesis of these essays to catch a glimpse of the flurry of activity that takes place beyond the parted
veil. These revelatory experiences that were both nurturing and stimulating sometimes found their way into the grammar of my essays.

Too often, though, our thoughts and expressions can be “carefully disguised with hypocrisy and glittering words.” (Einstein). I fancy myself a wordsmith, and have tried to avoid pedestrian expressions, idle language, and lazy scholarship. (See, for example, my essay entitled “Brevity”). I do not pretend to be an authority on any of the subjects of these treatises, and if their factual tone is sometimes disengaging, the truth is that I typically experienced a deep personal involvement when crafting in words expressions of the principles that illuminate their themes. Powerful emotions frequently framed my thoughts.

There are those among us who can write out pi to tens of thousands of digits. (In 2005, in China, Chao Lu memorized pi to 67,890 digits – a world record). I cannot come close to that, 3.14 being the extent of my knowledge of this irrational number, but I have been blessed with an imperfect ability to grasp concepts and expand them to timely and timeless proportions. There is an endless list of things about which I’d like to write. I want to explore the themes of Misplaced Keys, the Genesis Project, the Possibility of Intelligent Life on Earth, Doctrinal Dogma, Glowing in The Dark, Prophetic Priorities, Laziness as a Learned Response, Great and Spacious Buildings, Images and Likenesses, Illegal Aliens in Heaven, and the Middle of Nowhere.

Perhaps such essays will do little more than further denote and define quirks in my personality. Each of us is different, and many things, including our family and friends, the quality of our education, and our own personalities, inspire our expressions. I would like to think that all of these influences have been encouraging, affirmative, and constructive. “The Parable of The Pencil” touches on this when it speaks of the preservation of the sum of our experiences and of the record of that which has influenced us for good.

Most of these essays weave and wobble their way to a conclusion, although finality has not been my objective, and many subjects may leave the reader with disquieting loose ends with which to deal. As a thinker, writer and teacher who values careful scholarship, I would rather leave the door ajar to allow shafts of the light of knowledge to creep in as the dawning of recognition awakens the interest of others in particular subject areas. I would hope that I have built into the pages of these essays enough latitude to allow for divergent opinions and independent ideas, not to mention constructive criticism. If the essays ask more questions than they answer, and if, as I laid down my thoughts in hundreds of pages of text, I misstated myself now and then, (or flat-out got it wrong) I ask the indulgence and correction of the reader. There are roughly 900,000 words in 275 essays, and I am certain that I bobbled the ball more than a few times.

I find that no matter how often I have re-read an essay, I continue to come up with different ways of expressing myself. The ink on the page would barely have dried before I would be busy at work on a significant revision. There is no way to complete the process, and I have given up trying to do so. Even these printed volumes are works in progress. I think of them as living and breathing entities because, even in their imperfection, they have the generative power to stimulate my intellectual, philosophical, imaginative, and spiritual thought processes. Their real value, I hope, is to provoke a similar inquiry in the minds of others who read them.
Volume One
“Spray From The Ocean Of Thought”

“As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.”

(Henry David Thoreau)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Christmas Miracle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Letter To A Non-member Friend</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Mailbox Marked With An “X”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Personal Mission Statement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Perspective On Civil Liberties (Alma 50-51)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Perspective On The Apostasy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Recipe For Success</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Standard Of Excellence</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Testimony Of Christ</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Thirty-Day Spiritual Fitness Program</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Whirlwind Into Heaven (The Doctrine of Translation)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence In A Permissive World</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency And Opposition</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma’s Discourse On Faith (Alma 32)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An American Gospel</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Elect Lady (D&amp;C 25)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostasy</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Christians Mormon?</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Life And Death Mutually Exclusive?</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Mormons Christians?</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are We Alone In The Universe?</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism: A Foundation Ordinance</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism: The Gateway To The Celestial Kingdom</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batteries Are Not Included</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Happy Attitudes</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because Of The Book of Mormon</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become As Little Children</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before A Wound Can Heal</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being L.D.S. Is Like Being A Pumpkin</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Well-Grounded</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent Blindness</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Of Mormon Hiking Song</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Of Mormon Historicity</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Again</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosses And Leaders</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevity</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddy, Can You Spare A Dime?</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caesar (Mosiah 29)</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celestial Marriage And Eternal Families</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chastity Amid Permissiveness</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherubim And A Flaming Sword Or Mercy And Justice</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Is the Season Of The Year When</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Thoughts</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Historian (D&amp;C 47)</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Organization And Government (D&amp;C 20)</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating Evil</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Consent (D&amp;C 26)</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference (D&amp;C 44)</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant Consciousness</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion: An Ongoing Process</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry In The Scriptures</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detecting Satan’s Fingerprints</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Justly And Love Mercy (Micah 6:8)</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do We Dye Our Skins?</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does God Obey The Speed Limit?</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Partridge: First Bishop Of The Church (D&amp;C 36)</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embrace The Gospel (D&amp;C 49)</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enduring To The End</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entropy In The Physical World</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volume Two
"Ripples On A Pond"

As ripples on a pond, we are cast off into a stream of revelation and carried along in the quickening currents of direct experience with God.

Eternal Progression In A Dynamic Universe
Everyone Wants To Go To Heaven
Evidences Of God
Faith, Hope And Charity
Faith Is A Principle Of Power
Faith, Knowledge And Education
Fasting: A Principle Of Perfection
Fayette, New York – The Last Revelation (D&C 38)
Focus
Focusing On The Important Things
Follow The Prophet
For Unto Us A Child Is Born
Gifts of the Spirit
Goal Setting
God, Give Us Men!
God Goes Green
Godly Qualities (D&C 4)
Good, Better And Best
Gratitude Is An Attitude
Happiness And Sharing The Gospel
Having Been Commissioned Of Jesus Christ (D&C 22)
Higher Dimensional Realities
How Does God Get Things Done?
Huckleberries And Chokeberries
I Am The Light Of The World (John 8:12)
I Have Fought A Good Fight (2 Timothy 4:7)
I Have Overcome The World (John 16:33)
I Will Obey – James Covill (D&C 39)
If It Seems Too Good To Be True, It Probably Is
Is Heaven Hotter Than Hell?
It’s Our Book! (Mormon 3)
Joseph Smith History
Just Get Back On The Bike
Justice And Mercy (Alma 42)
Lamanites By The Waters Of Sebus (Alma 17:37)
Let A History Be Kept (D&C 47)
Let Me Be Perfectly Honest
Life Is A Three Act Play
Life Is Like A Game of Racquetball
Life’s Greatest Questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Support And Decisions (Life’s Important Decisions)</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light And Darkness</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look Who's Coming To Town (It isn’t Santa Claus)</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucifer</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining A Positive Mental Attitude</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management By The Spirit</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Is Ordained Of God</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Scripture</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Work: Our Greatest Call</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Discipline</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers In Zion</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-tasking</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating On The Snake</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninety Nine Questions Answered By The Book of Mormon</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Greater Call</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedience Is The First Law Of Heaven</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining The Spirit Of Revelation</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hundred And One Things</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Your Gates To The Gospel (D&amp;C 32)</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orson Pratt: A Son Of God (D&amp;C 34)</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Educational Responsibilities</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Eternal Nature</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Family Constitution</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Limiting Beliefs</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Talents</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Weaknesses</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming Adversity</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallelism In Hebrew Poetry</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Day Perspectives</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power: The Ultimate Test of Character</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Prior Preparation</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting Labels On Others</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quorum Sensing</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volume Three
“Serendipitous Meanderings”

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

(Louis Pasteur)

Receiving Revelation (D&C 8).................................................................1
Removing The Barnacles Of Life.............................................................5
Restoration Of The Aaronic Priesthood (D&C 13).................................7
Revelation...............................................................................................13
Reverence...............................................................................................19
Sacramental Waters...............................................................................23
Salvation by Grace..............................................................................31
Satan......................................................................................................39
Seraphim...............................................................................................43
Set Apart..............................................................................................45
Sharper Than A Two-Edged Sword (D&C 33).........................................47
Signs.....................................................................................................55
Sixty Five Ways To Express Gratitude....................................................57
So You’re Getting Married....................................................................59
Speak Kind Words To Each Other.........................................................61
Spiritual Calisthenics..........................................................................65
Spiritual Identity Theft.........................................................................69
Spiritual Manifestations......................................................................75
Steadying The Ark...............................................................................91
Strangers In The Land Success.............................................................93
Studying The Scriptures......................................................................95
Success Strategies...............................................................................99
Sydney Rigdon: Scribe To The Prophet (D&C 35)..................................105
Symbolism In The Scriptures...............................................................119
Symbols..............................................................................................167
Teaching In The Church.......................................................................181
Teaching Key Doctrine.......................................................................185
Technological Traps..........................................................................189
Temple Work.......................................................................................191
Testimony............................................................................................195
The 13th Article Of Faith.....................................................................199
The 14th Article Of Faith....................................................................201
The Ablest Mariner.............................................................................203
The Best Education Is To Be Perpetually Thrilled With Life..............205
The Bible And Other Scripture............................................................209
The Bible: Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.........................215
The Biggest Loser............................................................................217
The Character Of God........................................................................221
The Church In The Last Days..............................................................223
The Church Of Jesus Christ In Former Times....................................229
The Circle Of Knowledge..................................................................233
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Creation Of The World</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desert Shall Rejoice (D&amp;C 57)</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Door Swings Both Ways</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dust Of The Earth</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Duty Of The Priest (D&amp;C 20:46)</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Revelation (D&amp;C 2)</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Revelation In Ohio (D&amp;C 41)</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Heavens Were Open</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Holy Ghost</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hour Glass of Opportunity</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Isaiah Chapters In The Book Of Mormon</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last Judgment</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Law Of The Church</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Princess</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lord's Prophet</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Manuscript</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lost Ten Tribes</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Manifestation Of Spirits (D&amp;C 50)</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Meaning Of Doctrine</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Millennium</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mind of God</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nature Of God And Our Covenants</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New And Everlasting Covenant (D&amp;C 22)</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Order Of Revelation (D&amp;C 28)</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Parable Of The Pencil</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plan Of Salvation</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prime Directive</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prophet Joseph Smith</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Purpose Of Life</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Q Continuum</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rapids Of Life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Recipe For A Successful Church Address</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sabbath</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sacrament</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit of Gathering</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Coming</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secret Garden</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seeds Of Apostasy (D&amp;C 31)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Signs Of The Times</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit World</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Springtime Of The Year</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Switch Points In Our Lives</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Temple</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Testimony Of Phil Hudson</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third Part</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Witnesses</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thrill Of Victory The Agony of DeFeet</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Voice Of Prophetic Warning</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Windows Of Heaven</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Word Of Wisdom</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then The Pig Got Up And Slowly Walked Away</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Is A New Day</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those “Gold” Plates</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts On The Atonement (Alma 7:11-13)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Err Is Human; To Forgive Is Divine</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching His Garment</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough Questions (Alma 5)</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel At The Speed of Dark</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True to Our Covenants</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty-Five Qualities Of High Achievers</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up / Down</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates Are Ready</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Are Foreordained To Greatness</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Are His Hands</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Lived Before We Were Born</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, That’s Life</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were There Two Cumorahs?</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Talk of Christ</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What About Cherubim?</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What About The Mormons? (D&amp;C 45)</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Did He Just Say?</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Falls Down, Must Go Up</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Goes Around Comes Around</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Have Lost (James Covill) (D&amp;C 40)</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Say Unto One, I Say Unto All (D&amp;C 19)</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is A Christian?</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is Happiness?</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Qualifies Us For The Work? (D&amp;C 4)</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Think Ye of Christ? (Matthew 22:42)</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s In It For Me?</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Is Packing Your Parachute?</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Do We Laugh?</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Is Happiness So Elusive?</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Read The Doctrine &amp; Covenants? (D&amp;C 1)</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Was The Book of Mormon Preserved For Our Day?</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickedness Never Was Happiness</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without The Book of Mormon</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worlds Without Number Have I Created</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship In Music</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling The Scriptures</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing On Metal Plates Was A Pain</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Took No Thought Save To Ask</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion And The New Jerusalem (D&amp;C 57)</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion Versus Babylon</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topical Guide to The Essays

**Aaronic Priesthood**
Restoration of The Aaronic Priesthood (D&C 13)
The Duty of The Priest (D&C 20:46)

**Abstinence**
Abstinence in a Permissive World

**Achievement**
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
We are Foreordained to Greatness

**Adversity**
Overcoming Adversity
Spiritual Calisthenics
Spiritual Identity Theft
The Rapids of Life
This is a New Day
Travel at The Speed of Dark

**Agency**
Agency and Opposition
The Prime Directive
The Q Continuum

**Apostasy**
A Perspective on The Apostasy
Apostasy
The Seeds of Apostasy (D&C 31)

**Articles of Faith**
The 13th Article of Faith
The 14th Article of Faith

**Atonement**
Thoughts on The Atonement

**Attitude**
Be Happy Attitudes
Maintaining a Positive Mental Attitude
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
We are Foreordained to Greatness

**Attributes of God**
Does God Obey The Speed Limit?
Evidence of God
Godly Qualities (D&C 4)
How Does God Get Things Done?
The Character of God
The Mind of God
The Nature of God and Our Covenants
Touching His Garment

Authority
Steadying the Ark

Baptism
Baptism: A Foundation Ordinance
Baptism: The Gateway to The Celestial Kingdom

Belief
Our Limiting Beliefs
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Book of Mormon
Because of The Book of Mormon
Book of Mormon Historicity
Book of Mormon Song
It’s Our Book! (Mormon 3)
Ninety-nine Questions Answered by The Book of Mormon
The Lost Manuscript
Those “Gold” Plates
Why Was The Book of Mormon Preserved for Our Day?
Without The Book of Mormon
Writing on Metal Plates Was a Pain

Born Again
Born Again

Brevity
Brevity

Character
Godly Qualities (D&C 4)

Cherubim
Seraphim
What About Cherubim?

Children
Become as Little Children

Christ
A Testimony of Christ
For Unto Us a Child is Born
I am The Light of The World (John 3:12)
I Have Overcome The World (John 16:33)
Look Who’s Coming to Town (It Isn't Santa Claus)
The Ablest Mariner
The Second Coming
Touching His Garment
We Talk of Christ
What Think Ye of Christ? (Matthew 22:42)

**Christians**
Are Christians Mormon?
Are Mormons Christian?
What is a Christian?

**Christmas**
A Christmas Miracle
Christmas is The Season When.....
Christmas Thoughts
For Unto Us a Child is Born

**Church**
Being L.D.S. is Like Being a Pumpkin
Church Historian (D&C 47)
Church Organization & Government
Conference
One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism
The Church in The Last Days
The Church of Jesus Christ in Former Times
What About The Mormons? (D&C 45)

**Church Government**
Caesar
Common Consent
Conference
Edward Partridge: First Bishop of The Church (D&C 36)
Fayette, New York: The Last Revelation (D&C 38)
Quorum Sensing
Sydney Rigdon: Scribe to The Prophet (D&C 35)
The First Revelation (D&C 2)
The First Revelation in Ohio (D&C 41)
The Law of The Church (D&C 42)
The Three Witnesses

**Civil Liberties**
A Perspective on Civil Liberties

**Commandments**
What I Say Unto One, I Say Unto All (D&C 19)
Compensation
What Goes Around Comes Around

Conversion
Conversion
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Courage
God, Give us Men!
This is a New Day

Covenants
The Nature of God and Our Covenants
The New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 22)
True to Our Covenants
Covenant Consciousness

Creation
Are We Alone in The Universe?
Higher Dimensional Realities
The Creation of The World
The Dust of The Earth
Worlds Without Number

Cumorah
Were There Two Cumorahs?

Death
Are Life and Death Mutually Exclusive?
Everyone Wants to Go to Heaven

Darkness
Travel at The Speed of Dark

Dentistry
Dentistry in The Scriptures

Decisions
The Switch Points in Our Lives

Devil
Combating Evil
Detecting Satan's Fingerprints
Lucifer
Spiritual Identity Theft
Wickedness Never Was Happiness

Discipline
Moral Discipline

XX
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Diversity
Diversity

Doctrine
Teaching Key Doctrine
The Meaning of Doctrine

Doctrine & Covenants
Why Read The Doctrine & Covenants? (D&C 1)

Education
Our Educational Responsibilities
The Best Education is To Be Perpetually Thrilled with Life

Emma Smith
An Elect Lady

Endurance
Endure to The End
I Have Fought a Good Fight (2 Timothy 4:7)
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day

Environment
God Goes Green

Eternal Progression
Entropy in The Physical World
Eternal Progression in a Dynamic Universe
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Evil
Combating Evil
Detecting Satan's Fingerprints
Lucifer
Satan
Spiritual Identity Theft
Travel at The Speed of Dark
Wickedness Never Was Happiness
Zion Versus Babylon

Example
Orson Pratt: A Son of God (D&C 34)
The Ablest Mariner
Then The Pig Got Up and Slowly Walked Away
Excellence
A Standard of Excellence
Good, Better, and Best
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers

Faith
Alma’s Discourse on Faith
Faith is a Principle of Power
Faith, Hope, and Charity
Faith, Knowledge, and Education

Family
Our Family Constitution

Fasting
Fasting: a Principle of Perfection

Feet
The Thrill of Victory / The Agony of DeFeet

Focus
Being Well-Grounded
Focus
Focusing on The Important Things
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers

Forgiveness
The Door Swings Both Ways
The Secret Garden
The Third Part
To Err is Human, To Forgive is Divine

Friendship
A Letter to a Nonmember Friend

Gathering
Covenant Consciousness
Strangers in The Land
The Gathering
The Lost Ten Tribes

Goals
Goal Setting
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
Good and Evil
Up/Down
Wickedness Never Was Happiness

Gospel
An American Gospel
Embrace The Gospel
The New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 22)

Grace
Salvation by Grace

Gratitude
Gratitude is an Attitude
Sixty Five Ways to Express Gratitude

Happiness
Happiness and Sharing The Gospel
What is Happiness?
Why is Happiness so Elusive?
Wickedness Never Was Happiness

Heaven
Is Heaven Hotter Than Hell?
Up/Down

History
Let a History be Kept (D&C 47)
The Parable of The Pencil

Holy Ghost
Batteries are Not Included
Management by The Spirit
The Holy Ghost

Honesty
Let Me Be Perfectly Honest

Humility
The Dust of The Earth

Improvement
Our Limiting Beliefs
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
Updates are Ready
We are Foreordained to Greatness
Isaiah
The Isaiah Chapters in The Book of Mormon

Israel
Covenant Consciousness
Strangers in The Land
The Gathering
The Lost Ten Tribes

Joseph Smith
Joseph Smith History
The Prophet Joseph Smith
The Lord's Prophet

Journal
The Parable of The Pencil

Justice
Cherubim and a Flaming Sword
Do Justice and Love Mercy
Justice and Mercy (Alma 42)
The Last Judgment
The Third Part

Kindness
Benevolent Blindness
Speak Kind Words to Each Other

Knowledge
The Circle of Knowledge

Language
What Did He Just Say?

Last Days
The Church in The Last Days

Laughter
Why Do We Laugh?

Labels
Putting Labels on Others

Leadership
Bosses and Leaders

Life
Are Life and Death Mutually Exclusive?
Life is Like a Game of Racquetball

xxiv
Life's Greatest Questions
Life Support and Decisions (Life's Important Decisions)
The Purpose of Life
Well, That's Life

**Light**
Light
Light and Darkness

**Marriage**
Celestial Marriage and Eternal Families
Marriage is Ordained of God
So You're Getting Married

**Mercy**
Cherubim and a Flaming Sword
Do Justice and Love Mercy
Justice and Mercy (Alma 42)
The Third Part

**Millennium**
The Millennium

**Mission Statement**
A Personal Mission Statement

**Missionary Work**
Conversion
Happiness and Sharing The Gospel
Missionary Work: Our Greatest Call
No Greater Call
Open Your Gates To The Gospel (D&C 32)
We Talk of Christ
What About The Mormons? (D&C 45)
What Qualifies Us For The Work? (D&C 4)

**Morality**
Abstinence in a Permissive World
Chastity Amid Permissiveness

**Mother**
Mothers in Zion

**Multi-tasking**
Multi-tasking
This is a New Day

**Music**
Worship in Music
Nature
Our Eternal Nature
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Obedience
Do We Dye Our Skins?
I Have Fought a Good Fight (2 Timothy 4:7)
I Will Obey – James Covill (D&C 39)
Navigating on The Snake
Obedience is The First Law of Heaven
What's In It For Me?

Opportunity
The Hourglass of Opportunity

Opposition
Agency and Opposition
Huckleberries and Chokeberries
I Have Fought a Good Fight (2 Timothy 4:7)
Lamanites by The Waters of Sebus (Alma 17:37)
Spiritual Identity Theft
This is a New Day
Zion Versus Babylon

Perseverance
Just Get Back on The Bike
Spiritual Calisthenics
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Pioneers
Pioneer Day Perspectives

Plan of Salvation
Life is a Three-Act Play
Life is Like a Game of Racquetball
Life’s Greatest Questions
The Plan of Salvation
The Purpose of Life
The Third Part
The Isaiah Chapters in The Book of Mormon
The Little Princess

Potential
The Little Princess

Pre-Earth Life
Life is a Three-Act Play

xxvi
Life’s Greatest Questions
We Lived Before We Were Born

**Preparation**
Who is Packing Your Parachute?

**Priesthood**
Having Been Commissioned of Jesus Christ (D&C 22)

**Professors**
Professors

**Prophecy**
The Voice of Prophetic Warning

**Prophet**
Follow The Prophet

**Public Speaking**
The Recipe for a Successful Church Address

**Questions**
Tough Questions (Alma 5)

**Renewal**
The Springtime of The Year

**Repentance**
Before a Wound Can Heal
Removing The Barnacles of Life
The Biggest Loser
The Door Swing Both Ways
The Secret Garden
To Err is Human, To Forgive is Divine

**Restoration**
The Desert Shall Rejoice

**Resurrection**
What Does Down Must Go Up

**Revelation**
Fayette, New York: The Last Revelation (D&C 38)
Obtaining the Spirit of Revelation
Receiving Revelation (D&C 8)
Revelation
The First Revelation (D&C 2)
The Heavens Were Opened
The Manifestation of Spirits (D&C 50)
The Order of Revelation (D&C 28)
You Took No Thought Save to Ask

Reverence
Reverence

Sabbath
The Sabbath

Sacrament
Sacramental Waters
The Sacrament

Satan
Combating Evil
Detecting Satan’s Fingerprints
Satan
Travel at The Speed of Dark
Wickedness Never Was Happiness

Scholarship
You Took No Thought Save to Ask

Scripture
Missing Scripture
Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry
Sharper Than a Two-edged Sword (D&C 33)
Studying The Scriptures
Symbolism in The Scriptures
The Bible and Other Scripture
The Bible: Basic Information Before Leaving Earth
The Isaiah Chapters in The Book of Mormon
Wresting The Scriptures
Writing on Metal Plates Was a Pain

Second Coming
The Second Coming

Seraphim
Seraphim
What About Cherubim?

Service
We are His Hands

Set apart
Set apart

xxviii
Signs
The Signs of The Times

Spirit
Batteries are Not Included
Management by The Spirit
Spiritual Identity Theft
Spiritual Manifestations
The Spirit

Spirit World
The Spirit World

Spiritual Fitness
A Thirty-Day Spiritual Fitness Program
Spiritual Calisthenics

Spiritual Gifts
Gifts of The Spirit

Spirituality
Spiritual Calisthenics

Success
A Recipe for Success
Success Strategies
This is a New Day
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
We are Foreordained to Greatness

Symbolism
Symbols
Symbolism in The Scriptures

Talents
Our Limiting Beliefs
Our Talents

Teaching
Teaching in The Church
Teaching Key Doctrine

Technology
Technological Traps

Temple
Temple Work
The Temple

**Tenacity**
I Have Fought a Good Fight (2 Timothy 4:7)
Twenty-five Qualities of High Achievers
We are Foreordained to Greatness

**Testimony**
Testimony
The Testimony of Phil Hudson
We Talk of Christ

**Third Part**
The Third Part

**Time**
Time

**Tithing**
The Windows of Heaven

**Tolerance**
Do We Dye Our Skins?

**Transgression**
What I Have Lost (James Covill) (D&C 40)

**Translation**
A Whirlwind into Heaven

**Unity**
Unity

**Universe**
Are We Alone in The Universe?
Higher Dimensional Realities

**Walking in His Footsteps**
The Thrill of Victory / The Agony of DeFeet

**Weakness**
Our Weaknesses
Spiritual Calisthenics
We are Foreordained to Greatness

**Wisdom**
One Hundred and One Things I've Learned
The Word of Wisdom

XXX
Wishful Thinking
If It Seems To Good To Be True, It Probably Is

Witnesses
The Three Witnesses

Word of Wisdom
The Word of Wisdom

Words
What Did He Just Say?

Work
Work

Zion
Zion
Zion and The New Jerusalem (D&C 57)
Zion Versus Babylon
Eternal Progression
In A Dynamic Universe

“All men’s souls are immortal, but the souls of the righteous are immortal and divine.”

Socrates

Abinadi declared that “the time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just.” (Alma 16:1). From their understanding of the scriptures, Latter-day Saints believe that this shall take place as a result of the universality of the resurrection just before, during, and at the end of the Millennium.

Salvation is, after all, a gift of God given to all mankind. For “the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free.” (2 Nephi 2:4). We are redeemed from the Fall and have overcome physical death because of the resurrection of Christ. “O how great the plan of our God!” exclaimed Jacob. For “all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls.” (2 Nephi 9:14). In this sense, God denies “none that come unto him, black and white; bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.” (2 Nephi 26:33).

Exaltation, however, is a gift of God reserved for the obedient. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son,” said the Lord to John the Revelator. (Revelation 21:7). “We are the children of God,” wrote Paul to the Romans. “And if children, then...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Romans 8:16-17). As such, we may “receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” (1 Peter 5:4). This quality of glory is of a different nature than salvation. Exaltation represents eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom of God. Those who are blessed to live there have conformed their nature to that of their Father in Heaven. They have completely internalized the admonition of the Son of God, Who said: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48).

For many, redemption will occur only when the demands of justice have finally executed the required consequences for the violation of eternal law, after which they are released from bondage in the Spirit Prison of the Unjust. Or, it may occur at a post-mortal time when those formerly disobedient children of our Heavenly Father have improved their nature until a fullness of joy is attained in the eternities to come.

Nevertheless, there are certain points of doctrine that simply are not clear. To his son, Alma once declared: “Now these mysteries are not yet fully made known unto me; therefore I shall forbear.” (Alma 37:11). He felt that it was better to keep his opinion to himself, rather than to speculate without the foundation of revelation. Sometimes, it is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak, and remove all doubt. Still, a measured appraisal of the avenues open to the post-mortal children of our Heavenly Father seems indicated, in light of the latitude afforded by the relevant scriptures.
Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. agreed with Abinadi that “the time will come when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ,” and yet he felt that “the vast majority of mankind will go into the telestial kingdom eternally.” (“Doctrines of Salvation,” 2:30-31). It may be that the time when we may elect to live a celestial law has passed when we leave mortality and are judged and assigned to a lesser kingdom of glory. According to this scenario, we could thereafter progress only within the limitations of whichever kingdom we were in. Our progression would not be to the extent that it would ever lead us to live a celestial law. To put it another way, we would have lost the ability to exercise our capacity to become as God is because we had neglected to take advantage of the opportunity of a lifetime during the lifetime of the opportunity.

It does seem certain that if we wish to obtain exaltation and eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom, we must do more than simply acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. The critical point of conversion, beyond which lie the encircling flames of fire in the Celestial Kingdom of God, rests in making a conscious decision to accept not only Jesus Christ, but obedience to the principles of His Gospel as well.

A simple yet uncommitted recognition of Jesus will not qualify us for the Celestial Kingdom. Christians of convenience lack the fire ignited by the demands of discipleship. Many honorable people who accept Jesus will still go to the Terrestrial Kingdom. According to the scriptures, these are they who “received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. Last of all, these are all they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud.” (D&C 76:101-102).

Only those who passionately embrace the Gospel with its ordinances and covenants, and who then partake of the divine nature, may go to the highest degree of glory and live in the presence of God Himself. “These are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory; and are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, they are (as the) gods, even the sons of God.” (D&C 76:56-58, cf. John 10:34).

This distinction becomes vitally important to those billions of souls whose improvement, at least from a superficial or shallow perspective, would seem to halt at the Last Judgment because of poor decisions made in mortality. However, our faith in the divine Plan of the Father is founded on the marvelous principle that its implementation was designed to bring His children back into His presence after they had achieved spiritual maturity.

In fact, the Plan was so magnificent that upon its implementation, when the “foundation of the earth” was laid, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” (Job 38:7-8). It is inconceivable that a Plan of such transcendent perfection was intentionally created to save only a small percentage of Heavenly Father’s children in His Celestial Kingdom.

The question thus becomes: “Are our actions during mortality so significant that they will determine our status forever?” Before the Fall, Adam lived in the Garden of Eden in a morally static, vegetative state. It seems Satanic to argue that, for all practical purposes, most of his posterity will do so again, in a telestial existence stretching on endlessly throughout
all eternity. After all, it was the devil, and not our Elder Brother Jesus Christ, who sought “that all men might be miserable like unto himself.” (2 Nephi 2:27). It is inconceivable that Satan could be declared the ultimate numerical winner in the ideological conflict that commenced in heaven so long ago?

It is more palatable to consider the possibility that we may add to our glory to such a degree that we can eternally progress not only within a kingdom, but also from one degree of glory to another. In essence, when we have outgrown the apartment that once satisfied our needs, is it possible to move on to a domicile that more adequately suits our then current circumstances? The answer to this question remains unsettled in the Church. The position of the First Presidency is one of neutrality. “The Church has never announced a definite doctrine upon this point. Some of the Brethren have held the view that it (is) possible in the course of progression to advance from one glory to another, involving the principle of eternal progression; others of the Brethren have taken an opposite view.” (Joseph Anderson, Secretary to The First Presidency, Letter to Ward Magleby, 3/5/1952).

The statement by Joseph Anderson quoted above recognizes that there are faithful members of the Church who believe that it may still be possible to progress, after the Final Judgment, from one degree of glory to another. D&C 76:112 has been quoted as one evidence that progression between degrees of glory is not possible: “And they (referring to those who inherit telestial glory) shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.”

But this verse does not talk about progression from one degree to another but only states that individuals with telestial characteristics cannot come where God and Christ dwell. This passage refers to qualities of general classes of people rather than to those of individuals, and does not say what will happen to those who change their nature. In other words, those with the described characteristics obviously cannot come where Christ is. But if they are able to make behavioral changes, if they can change their nature so that as they mature their character more fully reflects their Father’s, perhaps they will then be permitted to enjoy His hearth and home.

Those who inherit telestial glory are described as heirs of salvation through the ministration of angels who shall be servants of the Most High. (D&C 76:88 & 112). But the Lord revealed to Moses that His whole focus of attention, His very work and glory expressed in His mission statement, is to bring about both the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:28-29).

Misunderstanding has also arisen from a casual reading of D&C 76:73-74: “These are they who are of the terrestrial...Behold, these are they who died without law; and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.”

Some misinterpret these verses, erroneously concluding that if one accepts the Gospel after leaving this life he will be eligible only for the terrestrial degree of glory. If that were true, then much of the work done in the temple would be ineffectual in accomplishing the end for which it was designed.
The difficulty arises out of a failure to recognize the aforementioned distinction between the acceptance of Jesus Christ and acceptance of His Gospel with all its ordinances and covenants that are administered by the holy priesthood. Those “who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just (are) they who” accept the Fullness of The Gospel, who “received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized….that by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; And those who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise…are they who are the church of the Firstborn.” (D&C 76:51-54).

Another way of looking at this issue is to accept the premise that hell is a reformatory designed to improve the quality of our moral nature. It is a penitentiary where faith can still convict us of our sins. It was designed to help disobedient spirits recognize that Christ is the Mediator of the Covenant through His infinite and eternal Atonement. D&C 76 teaches that the Gospel was taught to the spirits kept in that prison. If, while there, they exercise their agency and accept only Christ, and not the fullness of His Gospel, they will then inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom.

However, those in the Spirit Prison who accept the Fullness of the Gospel and have the necessary ordinances of exaltation performed in their behalf in the temple, will be heirs of the Celestial Kingdom of glory. “These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.” (D&C 76:62). And “the presence of the Lord shall be as the melting fire that burneth, and as the fire which causeth the waters to boil.” (D&C 133:41). Those of His children who have grown to the stature of their Father shall approach His dwelling place, and shall see “the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which (is) like unto circling flames of fire; Also the blazing throne of God, wherein (shall be) seated the Father and the Son.” And the “beautiful streets of that kingdom, (shall have) the appearance of being paved with gold.” (D&C 137:2-4).

It was mercifully foreordained that the prisoners thronging the pit should in due time be visited (Isaiah 24:21-22), and be offered means of amelioration. (Isaiah 42:7). Even David sang rapturously, ‘Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.’ (Psalms 16:10). True, the scriptures speak of endless punishment, and depict everlasting burnings, eternal damnation, and the sufferings incident to unquenchable fire, as features of the Judgment reserved for the wicked. But none of these awful possibilities are anywhere in scripture declared to be the unending fate of the individual sinner.”

Elder Talmage went on to say: “Blessing or punishment ordained of God is eternal, for He is eternal, and eternal are all His ways. His is a system of endless and eternal punishment, for it will always exist as the place or condition provided for the rebellious and disobedient, but the penalty will terminate when through repentance and expiation the necessary reform has been effected and the uttermost farthing paid.

Even to hell there is an exit as well as an entrance; and when the sentence has been served, commuted perhaps by repentance and its attendant works, the prison doors shall open and the penitent captive be afforded opportunity to comply with the law which he aforetime violated. But the prison remains, and the eternal decree prescribing punishment for the offender stands unrepaeled. So it is even with the penal institutions established by man.” (“The Vitality of Mormonism,” p. 264-265).
J. Reuben Clark, Jr. reasoned: “I am not a strict constructionist, believing that we seal our eternal progress by what we do here. It is my belief that God will save all His children that He can; and while, if we live unrighteously here, we shall not go to the other side in the same status, so to speak, as those who live righteously; nevertheless, the unrighteous will have their chance, and in the eons of the eternities that are to follow, they, too, may climb to the destinies to which they who are righteous and serve God, have climbed.” (“Church News,” 3/23/1960).

Perhaps God will leave his unrighteous and disobedient children in the Spirit Prison of The Unjust only long enough for them to recognize the error of their ways, and to motivate them to make behavioral changes that are consistent with the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With a full recognition of their violation of law, such individuals might be required to pay directly for the sins committed in mortality that had fallen outside the merciful sphere of influence of the Atonement of the Savior. Such a punishment would be eternally and endlessly in harmony with the Law of Justice.

Our Father in Heaven wants us to accept His Firstborn Son and Gospel so that we may avoid the “weeping and gnashing of teeth” that accompany the recognition that our “days of probation are past; (when we) have procrastinated the day of (our) salvation until it is everlastingly too late, and (our) destruction is made sure.” (J.S.M. 1:54, & Helaman 13:38).

When we seek “all the days of (our) lives for that which (we) cannot obtain, and...have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head,” we must nevertheless ultimately face the consequences. (Helaman 13:38). It is then, in the most difficult circumstances of repentance imaginable, when the uttermost farthing is paid, that the necessary reform can take place.

How much better it would have been to have listened to the prophets. “And in the days of your poverty ye shall cry unto the Lord; and in vain shall ye cry, for your desolation is already come upon you, and your destruction is made sure; and then shall ye weep and howl in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts. And then shall ye lament, and say: O that I had repented, and had not killed the prophets, and stoned them, and cast them out. Yea, in that day ye shall say: ...O that we had repented in the day that the word of the Lord came unto us.” (Helaman 13:32-36).

Such a scenario is in harmony with Brigham Young’s belief that “all organized existence is in progress either to an endless advancement in eternal perfections, or back to dissolution. There is no period in all the eternities,” he believed, “wherein organized existence will become stationary, that it cannot advance in knowledge, wisdom, power, and glory.” (J.D. 1:349).

Joseph Smith declared to an assembly of the Saints: “I could explain a hundred-fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.” (H.C. 5:402) After all is said and done, when all the leaders of the Church have been quoted and the scriptures cited, the fact remains that we have not been given the revelations that answer the questions relating to progression between kingdoms of glory. But intuitively we want to believe that it is possible.
Everyone Wants To Go To Heaven

(But No One Wants to Die First)

Everyone wants to go to heaven. Everyone wants immortal glory, to go to the heavenly land, the Celestial Kingdom of God, to enjoy glory in the eternal world, to enter the Third Heaven to claim their reward, and to go home to God’s Rest and the Bosom of the Lord.

But no one wants to die first. Too many fear “something after death, the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns.” (Shakespeare, “Hamlet,” Act 3, Scene 1). They fear that uncertain future and the spectre of a long night of darkness. The shadow of death conjures up visions of the chains of hell, the Grim Reaper, the Angel of Death and the Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse.

My father died in 1998. He was 86 years old, and it wasn’t so disturbing that he died – we’d all been expecting it because of his declining health. It was just that we’d gotten so accustomed to having him around. We still miss him. But one of the best things about his passing was the manner in which he slipped away.

I know he’d been afraid of death, although he wouldn’t admit it. Not many things frightened him, but I am sure the process of dying was troubling to his soul. I think he was anxious at the thought of losing his life because he was powerless to change in the least way the inevitable course of events cascading before him. As Isaac Asimov said: “Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It’s the transition that’s troublesome.” Then, as it turned out, my dad simply exhaled one last time and was gone. I really think that as he passed through the veil to the other side, he must have exclaimed: “That wasn’t so bad after all.” Still, I hope he was prepared for what came next.

On a larger stage, I am reminded of the reassuring words of the Lord: “Those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them.” (D&C 42:46). The Saints are continually consoled with the promise: “If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.” (John 8:52). As Joseph Fielding Smith declared: “They shall never die the second death and feel the torment of the wicked when they come face to face with eternity.” (“Church History and Modern Revelation,” 1:186).

Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die first. But “death hath passed upon all men to fulfil the merciful plan of the Great Creator.” (2 Nephi 9:6). “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). But it all makes sense only if it is viewed in the larger context of the Plan of Salvation, where it was ordained that “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Sometimes, the inevitable transition is dramatic, as when for Elijah “there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire…and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” (2 Kings 2:11). Ultimately, however, whether we go out quietly or with fanfare, “neither death nor life…shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” (Romans 8:38). Because of that love, “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Christ showed us the path we must follow when He said: “I am the way, the truth, and
the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6). His Atonement focuses our attention on an empty tomb. “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” asked the angel. “He is not here, but is risen.” (Luke 24:5-6).

The two most important days of our lives are the day we were born and the day we find out why. As the scriptures teach: “No man can come unto me, except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me.” (J.S.T. John 6:44). Helen Keller famously declared: “I believe that no good shall be lost, and that all man has willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist forever. I believe in the immortality of the soul because I have within me immutable longings. I believe that the state we enter after death is wrought of our own motives, thoughts, and deeds. I believe that my home there will be beautiful with colour, music, and speech of flowers and faces I love. Without this faith, there would be little meaning in my life. I should be a mere pillar of darkness in the dark. Observers in the full enjoyment of their bodily senses pity me, but it is because they do not see the golden chamber in my life where I dwell delighted; for dark as my path may seem to them, I carry a magic light in my heart. Faith, the spiritual strong searchlight, illuminates the way, and although sinister doubts lurk in the shadow, I walk unafraid towards the Enchanted Wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides, where nightingales nest and sing, and where life and death are one in the presence of the Lord.” (“Midstream”). Such a manifestation of “spirituality,” declared David O. McKay, “is the consciousness of victory over self, and of communion with the infinite.” (C.R., 10/1969).

How strange it is that physicians monitor “vital signs” only by checking heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration rate; that when they feel for the pulse, they put their finger on the wrist and not on the heart. How presumptuous for them to pompously pronounce patients “dead” when they are only physically inanimate. Physicians “call it,” documenting the “time of death” without ever realizing that what they are really doing is documenting the “death of time.”

Death is a terminator line and an event horizon beyond which we cannot see. We know nothing of the ebb and flow of life on the far side of our vision. The distinction is absolute, and there are no shades of grey between “life” and “death.” As long as we maintain our mortal perspective, we cannot have it both ways; we cannot live both in the world and in eternity.

We cannot easily see the bigger picture. We perceive only Act Two of the Three Act Play, because our Father loves us and created a Plan for us requiring an exercise of free will in an atmosphere in which all possible alternatives are on the table. This necessitated that a veil be placed over our memory. For the time being, as Paul observed, “we see through a glass, darkly.” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Now, we know only a part of the bigger picture. Then, we shall face a wider, more vibrant, more animate, and more accurate reality. Paul revealed something about our nature, when he wrote: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Selfishness might possibly have something to do with our fear of death. If so, it is because we wander and play rather than ponder and pray, because we follow the path of least resistance, and slip into self-induced fogs of carelessness and inattention. Thoughtless stupor dulls our senses, saps our nervous energy, and stilts our tendency to be anxiously
engaged. It makes us less likely to feel the chronic pain of a stiff neck, and more likely
to accept as natural a limited range of motion, even though it makes us less inclined to
look up to the infinite reaches of eternity for comfort and assurance.

When we get caught up in telestial traffic we are less likely to deliberately move toward
celestial sureties. Conceptual cul-de-sacs make it less likely that we will find our way
out of the maze of mediocrity. Seeking the lowest common denominator, we are less
inclined to move to higher ground. If “I” and “Mine” are our favorite pronouns, we will
be less likely to expand our vocabulary to include “Thee” and “Thine.” If we have gilded
tongues, we will be less likely to become fluent in the language of the Spirit. The bottom
line is, that if we retreat into our comfort zone, anything that rocks our boat will cause
instability, indecisiveness, and insecurity, and we will draw back from the concerted
efforts that are required to substantively change.

The familiarity of “here and now” can be a compellingly attractive alternative to the
risk associated with breaking camp and moving to greener pastures. “No pain, no
gain” is a hard lesson to learn but until we spread our wings, we’ll have no idea how
far we can walk.

We don’t know when our own “deadline” will loom large, but it is certain that filing
an extension to buy more time from the grim reaper is not an option. We must take
advantage of that which we have, and live purposefully. Sooner or later, we must
“pay for the sin of idleness, when the hobnailed boots of indiscretion’s marathon
dancer have tapped a rowdy two-step across the terracotta of our consciousness;
when excess has become our master and reason has been cast into the rumble seat
of our libidinous juggernaut. At some point, the piper must be paid!” (Pogo, The
Cartoon Philosopher). Better to be anxiously engaged. As Issac Asimov said: “If
my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn’t brood. I’d type a little

Everyone wants to go to heaven. But if we do not have an inventory of life-sustaining
influences to nourish us, we will not be prepared for the birth that we call death. If we
pre-play before we re-play, though, our expanding reserve of assets will include prayer,
testimony, covenants, temple, family, and a community with the Saints. If we have
learned to live and breathe, and have our being in Jesus Christ, our last exhalation on
earth will be not an end, but a beginning.

Along the way, some are worn down by life, while others are polished to a high luster
and are carried as on the wings of eagles, soaring above the pitfalls, the roadblocks
and stumbling blocks, the wily snares of the adversary, the rapids of life, the carnival
atmosphere of the world, the vacation homes in Idumea, and the idle talk and loud
laughter of aimlessly distracted individuals who mistake the fog of confusion for spa
aroma therapy.

One day before his assassination, Martin Luther King, Jr. said: “I don’t know what will
happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead, but it doesn’t matter with me now
because I’ve been to the mountaintop and I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to
live a long life. Longevity has its place but I’m not concerned about that now. I just
want to do God’s will. He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I’ve looked over
and I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that as a people we will get to the Promised Land. And I’m happy tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.” (Memphis, Tennessee, 4/3/1968).

From that elevated vantage point, where the air is a little clearer and there is less atmospheric pollution, we can be as the aviator who exulted: “Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings. Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of; Wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence. Hovering there, I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air. Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue I’ve topped the windswep heights with easy grace, where never lark, or even eagle flew. And, while with silent, lifting mind I’ve trod the high untrespassed sanctity of space, I put out my hand, and touched the face of God.” (John G. Magee, Jr., “High Flight”).

As the Prophet Joseph once said of his personal experience with the Savior: “He enveloped me into his Bosom, and I was carried away in the Spirit.” When we surrender ourselves to His influence, our learning process begins in earnest. The scales of darkness fall away, we experience a newfound elasticity as we are healed of our spiritual sclerosis, we develop an immunity to false idolatry, and we are inured to the misapprehensions of life. When we sit at the feet of the Master, here on earth, we establish our place at His table in eternity.

No one wants to “die first.” But that is exactly what we must do. Our acceptance of His invitation to sup with Him seals our fate. Some “die as to things pertaining to the Spirit” while others are “alive in Christ.” All must be “born again” because “the natural man is an enemy to God, and will be unless he yields to the enticings of the Spirit.” (Mosiah 3:19). All suffer in this world, but without Christ we suffer not only headaches but also heartaches. These are pains that are avoidable. As Louisa May Alcott wrote of Beth: She “could not reason upon or explain the faith that gave her courage and patience to give up life, and cheerfully wait for death. Like a confiding child, she asked no questions, but left everything to God and nature, Father and Mother of us all, feeling sure that they, and they only, could teach and strengthen heart and spirit for this life and the life to come.” (“Little Women”).

We have hospital instructions that dictate: “Do Not Resuscitate,” because there is no hope of restoration or expectation of a return to a decent quality of life. As care providers, we sometimes say: “Let him go,” without knowing his destination. But as Sidney Carton said: “It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.” (Charles Dickens, “A Tale of Two Cities”).

“Death is putting out the lamp, because the dawn has come.” (T. Ragore). What is “life support” anyway, but an artificial mechanism employed to maintain basic bodily organ system functions? It requires external influences for maintenance. When “life support” is withdrawn, the individual is left on his/her own. The ultimate expression of this principle is in the statement that men are “agents unto themselves” for “the power is in them.” (D&C 58:28). If we live large, we can laugh in the very face of death, “for the soul is dead that slumbers, and things are not what they seem. Life is real. Life is earnest.
And the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art; to dust returnest was not spoken of the soul.” (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “A Psalm of Life”).

Without life support, we come face to face with the reality that the cost of admission to heaven is death. Some go kicking and screaming, but we have all witnessed those for whom death has had dignity, for whom it seemed to be a sacramental experience. For them, the Lord “is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.” (Luke 20:38). For them, the promise is clear: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” (John 11:25).

The Eleventh Hymn of the Dead Sea Covenanters declared: “Behold, for mine own part I have reached the intervision, and through the spirit thou has placed within me, come to know Thee, my God.” In similar fashion, Moses wrote: “But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, 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.” (Moses 1:11).

Everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die first. But, “if we advance confidently in the direction of our dreams, and endeavour to live the life which we have imagined, we will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” (Henry David Thoreau). Truly did Socrates reassure us: “All men's souls are immortal, but the souls of the righteous are both immortal and divine.”
Evidences Of God

“Everyone who is seriously interested in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a Spirit is manifest in the law of the Universe.”

(Albert Einstein)

“Earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush with fire of God. But only those who see take off their shoes. The rest stand around picking blackberries.” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning). We don’t need a burning bush on Sinai, or smoke and thunder emanating from its summit, as physical reminders of God. “The earth rolls upon her wings, and the sun giveth his light by day, and the moon giveth her light by night, and the stars also give their light, as they roll upon their wings in their glory, in the midst of the power of God. Unto what shall I like these kingdoms, that ye may understand? Behold, all these are kingdoms, and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power.” (D&C 88:45-47).

Ralph Waldo Emerson was particularly sensitive to the love letters sent by God to His children. On one occasion he wrote: “The man who has seen the rising moon break out of the clouds at midnight has been present like an archangel at the creation of light and of the world.” (“Essay - History”). On another occasion, he wrote: “If stars should appear but once in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations, the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown.” (“Nature,” Chapter 1).

From the quiet perspective of his home in Concord, Massachusetts, he mused: “I see the spectacle of morning from the hilltop over against my house, from daybreak to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long, slender bars of cloud float like fishes in a sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous.” (“Nature,” Chapter 3).

With sensitivity and insight William Wordsworth penned these lines: “Heaven lies about us in our infancy! Shades of the prison house begin to close upon the growing boy. But he beholds the light, and whence it flows; he sees it in his joy. The youth, who daily farther from the east must travel, still is nature’s priest, and by the vision splendid, is on his way attended. At length, the man perceives it die away, and fade into the light of common day.” (“Ode: Intimations of Immortality”). All too frequently, when we secularize the sacred, profound truths are homogenized into easily digestible forms, ennobling principles are reduced to rational explanation, and expediency replaces undeviating commitment to moral standards of behavior.

Only after we have exerted the effort to squeeze through the strait and narrow gate, will our way open up into broad boulevards lined with fig trees laden with fruit, flooded by sunlight, caressed by soothing breezes and paved with cobblestones that glint of gold. Only then will there be no billboards to clamor for our attention, no neon lights to distract us, and no cacophony of voices assaulting us from every direction to suppress
the serenity of a Gospel-centered life. Instead, we will be as the aviator who exulted, “Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings. Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of; Wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence. Hovering there, I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air. Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue I’ve topped the windswept heights with easy grace, where never lark, or even eagle flew. And, while with silent, lifting mind I’ve trod the high untrespassed sanctity of space, I put out my hand, and touched the face of God.” (John G. Magee, Jr., “High Flight”).

These emotions are facilitated by our Father in Heaven Who has given something of Himself, that we might grow as we learn to pattern our lives after that of the Great Exemplar. His priesthood “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinance thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh. For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.” (D&C 84:19-22).
God has bestowed his Spirit upon us so that we might be able to exercise faith in Christ and thus lay hold upon every good thing. He has thus given us the power to become His sons and daughters as we “cleave unto every good thing.” (Moroni 7:28). Through the Atonement, Christ is our advocate before the Father, and is the means of our salvation and exaltation.

He utilizes many techniques to build faith among His people. Angels are often commissioned to the work. “And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.” (Moroni 7:31).

The Lord told Joseph Smith: “To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.” (D&C 46:13-14). This would apply to all those who listen as the General Authorities of the Church bear testimony. “And by doing so, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts.” (Moroni 7:32).

Today, the Twelve Apostles and other General Authorities of the Church declare with boldness their witness of the truth, that faith might swell in the hearts of all those who hear them. Hence the following sampling: “I know Him. I testify that He is real. I testify as a witness.” (Enzio Busche). “I know that God lives, for as in the words of my predecessor, John Taylor, I have seen Him.” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Ensign,” 5/1978, p. 48). “I know of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it has been revealed to me in a most interesting, complete, and beautiful way.” (L. Tom Perry). “I leave you with that special witness which is mine to bear, for I have witnessed it with my own eyes, and heard it with my own ears.” (L. Tom Perry). “In a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and shall wet his feet with my tears. But I shall not know any better then than I know now that he is God’s Almighty Son, that he is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through his atoning blood and in no other way.” (Bruce R. McConkie, C.R., 4/1985).

As the spark of faith, struck off the divine anvil of God, ignites the flame of resolve in individuals, they develop the “power to do whatsoever thing is expedient” or right to do, under the circumstances. That thing is to “repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and...receive the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38). This is “the fruits of faith,” which is to be saved in the Celestial Kingdom of God. It is why Jesus Christ and His servants minister among the children of men.

He will continue the ministry and work miracles among the children of men, as “long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved.” (Moroni 7:36). But when an individual or a society is fascinated with sorcery, witchcraft, and magic, is mesmerized by telestial trivia, is caught up in conceptual cul