The One Pure Defense
President Boyd K. Packer

"A Miracle from Day One": Publication of the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts
Rebecca L. McConkie

A Light in the Wilderness: Robert J. Matthews and His Work on the Joseph Smith Translation
Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid

A Community of Christ Perspective on the JST Research of Robert J. Matthews: An Interview with Ronald E. Romig
Brian M. Hauglid and Ray L. Huntington

Precious Truths Restored: Joseph Smith Translation Changes Not Included in Our Bible
W. Jeffrey Marsh and Thomas E. Sherry

"The Best Two Years of Our Lives": A CES Mission Remembered
Ed and Bunkie Griffith

Endowed with Power
Steven C. Harper

Teaching the Fall and the Atonement: A Comparative Method
Roger R. Keller

The Joseph Smith Translation
“The Best Two Years of Our Lives”
Teaching the Fall and the Atonement

"Spiritual diseases of epidemic proportion sweep over the world. We are not able to curb them. But we can prevent our youth from being infected by them."

President Boyd K. Packer
“The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. . . These are days of great spiritual danger for our youth.”

President Boyd K. Packer

ON THE COVER:
A pristine mountain lake symbolizes the pure doctrine that will protect our youth.

PHOTO COURTESY
The Religious Educator is published two to three times a year by the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 167 Heber J. Grant Building, Provo, UT 84602-2701.

The Religious Educator is designed to serve the interests and needs of those who study and teach the gospel on a regular basis. The distinct focuses of the Religious Educator are on teaching the gospel; publishing studies on scripture, doctrine, and Church history; and sharing the messages of outstanding devotional essays. The contributions to each issue are carefully reviewed and edited by experienced teachers, writers, and scholars.

We anticipate that the articles published in the Religious Educator will appeal to anyone interested in perspectives on the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Articles will be selected on the basis of their appeal to and appropriateness for religion professors at each of the Brigham Young University campuses, full-time seminary and institute teachers and administrators, volunteer early-morning and home-study seminary teachers, and volunteer institute of religion teachers. In every issue, we plan a selection of articles that will be helpful and appealing to this diverse audience. In each issue, we hope that each group will find one or more articles that meet the individual needs of members of the group. The beliefs of the respective authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Manuscripts submitted for consideration must be word processed in double-spaced format, including quotations. A minimum of embedded word-processing commands should be used. Authors should follow style conventions of the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition, and the Style Guide for Publications of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as reflected in a recent issue of the Religious Educator.

At the time an author submits an article for possible publication, the author should submit one copy of the prospective article, an electronic file of the article on an IBM-compatible diskette formatted in Microsoft Word, and photocopies of all source materials cited, arranged in order, numbered to coincide with endnotes, and highlighted to reflect the quotations or paraphrases. Photocopies of source material must include title page and source page with the quotations used highlighted.

Complete author guidelines, including suitable topics, are provided at the Web site for the Religious Educator, tre.byu.edu. Send manuscripts to the Religious Educator, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 167A Heber J. Grant Building, Provo, UT 84602-2701.

Manuscripts received will be checked to see if they conform to style-guide requirements and will undergo a preliminary review. Those manuscripts that meet all criteria will be peer reviewed and will receive a friendly but careful review. Authors will then be notified of the decision about publication.

Subscriptions to the Religious Educator are open to anyone interested in perspectives on the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. The subscription rate is $10 per year. Subscribers can place orders on-line at tre.byu.edu (preferred method) or by mail addressed to Creative Works, Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602-1231. Mail subscriptions must include the following information: name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address (optional; for renewal purposes only), current CES responsibilities, an indication of the number of years of subscription desired (up to three), and a check or money order made out to Creative Works. Subscription questions should be sent via e-mail to catalog@byu.edu and should include “TRE Subscriptions” on the subject line. Back issues are available online only.

ISSN 1536-4720

© 2004 by Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. on acid-free paper
Editors’ Introduction

The world’s morals are spiraling downward, but parents and teachers can help youth to find safety by strengthening their faith in Jesus Christ. In “The One Pure Defense,” President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, emphasizes the importance of the home as our main defense against evil. “This shield of faith is handmade in a cottage industry,” he writes. “It can be polished in the classroom, but it is fabricated and fitted in the home, handcrafted to each individual.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith considered his new translation of the Bible to be a major part of his prophetic calling. In this issue, we devote four articles to the Joseph Smith Translation, including an interview about an upcoming book on the original manuscripts. Two articles look at the significant, groundbreaking work of BYU professor Robert J. Matthews. And a fourth article shows some Joseph Smith Translation changes that are not in our current edition of the Bible.

Is a Church Educational System mission right for you? Ed and Bunkie Griffith had long planned on serving a mission together, and their decision to submit their papers launched them into an unforgettable adventure. Describing their mission as the best two years of their lives, they share stories from their wonderful and challenging experience in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Driving through the darkness without lights would frighten the most experienced driver. In “Endowed with Power,” Steven C. Harper describes his great relief when his parents drove up and led him home with “borrowed light.” He uses this metaphor for the light that the temple offers us as it teaches us about the plan of salvation and the way back to our Father in Heaven.

Rather than seeing the Fall as a disaster, Latter-day Saints see it as an immense step forward in humanity’s eternal progression. Such teachings set our Church apart from other Christian religions, as Roger R. Keller clearly demonstrates in this insightful article that compares our beliefs on the Fall and the Atonement with those of other churches.

We hope readers will enjoy the strong historical and doctrinal pieces in this issue.

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Editor-in-Chief
Ted D. Stoddard, Associate Editor
R. Devan Jensen, Executive Editor
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The One Pure Defense&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;President Boyd K. Packer&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>“A Miracle from Day One”: Publication of the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Rebecca L. McConkie&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Robert J. Matthews and His Work on the Joseph Smith Translation&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>A Community of Christ Perspective on the JST Research of Robert J. Matthews: An Interview with Ronald E. Romig&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Brian M. Hauglid and Ray L. Huntington&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Precious Truths Restored: Joseph Smith Translation Changes Not Included in Our Bible&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;W. Jeffrey Marsh and Thomas E. Sherry&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>“The Best Two Years of Our Lives”: A CES Mission Remembered&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Ed and Bunkie Griffith&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Endowed with Power&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Steven C. Harper&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Teaching the Fall and the Atonement: A Comparative Method&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Roger R. Keller&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>New Publications&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;A Mormon Bibliography, 1830–1930&lt;br&gt;The Fulness of the Gospel: Foundational Teachings from the Book of Mormon&lt;br&gt;A Book of Mormon Treasury&lt;/i&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
President Boyd K. Packer is Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

This address was given to Church Educational System religious educators on February 6, 2004, at the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

World War II stopped as suddenly as it had begun five years earlier. All at once, I had something I was not sure I would have. I had a future. It was a strange feeling. What does one do with a future?

I was on Ie Shima, a tiny speck of an island off the northwest coast of Okinawa. A few days earlier the island had been destroyed by a typhoon of such ferocious power that large ships went down and planes were blown off the island. The storm was passed, and the war was over, and I had a future.

One calm, clear, moonlit night, I sat alone on a cliff high above the beach. Only a few days before, the ocean, so calm now, sent immense waves crashing over the top of that cliff. I sat for hours pondering and praying. I decided what to do with my future. I would be a teacher.

I had a college degree in education, and of consummate importance, I had a wife and two little boys.

Suddenly I was a seminary teacher hired midyear to replace John
P. Lillywhite, who was called out of the classroom to preside over the Netherlands Mission. I knew what to do with my future.

I had no idea that I would be here now speaking to teachers. I was content then, and I would be content now, to be a classroom teacher. And my wife would be content to join me.

Knowing what I know now, I do not expect in the field of destiny to be rewarded for my present calling above those of you I have known who wore out your lives one day at a time teaching in the classroom.

But we are here. I say we, for my wife is with me. We do not know how many years are allotted us. Not a great number, I would think. But we have sure testimonies of the Father and the Son and the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost.

We know also that the being from the unseen world who confronted the boy Joseph in the Sacred Grove is always near, for as Peter said, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Now, by moral and social and political and even intellectual standards, we seem to be losing. But mankind also knows that in the final windup scene Satan cannot win.

There are over forty thousand of you here in this meeting. Measured against the need, that really is not a great number. But I remember hearing Sir Winston Churchill say in the darkest hours of World War II, speaking of a handful of Royal Air Force pilots facing almost insurmountable odds, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

In October of 1983, I returned from South America and left almost immediately for London to join Elder Neal A. Maxwell at the first regional conference as a substitute for one of the First Presidency. This first conference was something of an experiment.

We met in the Hyde Park Chapel for a four-hour priesthood meeting. Elder Maxwell spoke first, quoting King Benjamin, “Brethren, we did not come here to trifle with words” (see Mosiah 2:9). What he said next changed my life: “We come to you today in our true identity as Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Suddenly my body was filled with warmth and light. The weariness of travel was replaced by confidence and confirmation. What we were doing was approved of the Lord.

I have never forgotten that moment, much like moments of inspiration each of you has experienced. Such moments confirm that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is true.
**Book of Memory**

As I prepared to meet you here tonight, I had great difficulty in keeping my book of memory closed.

I remember tall, smiling J. Wiley Sessions, who opened the first institute of religion at Moscow, Idaho.

Thomas J. Yates, an engineer at a power plant in the mountains east of Salt Lake City, rode a horse down the canyon each day to teach at the first released-time seminary, Granite. I did not know Brother Yates, but I remember those who replaced him.

Abel S. Rich, an agriculture teacher, was hired to go across the street from the high school in Brigham City to an adobe home to open the second released-time seminary. He was serving as principal when Elder A. Theodore Tuttle and I taught there together.

Brother Tuttle had been a lieutenant in the Marines. At Iwo Jima he returned to the ship to get a large flag. On shore he handed it to a runner who took it to the top of Mount Sirabachi and on to the pages of history.

Before Brother Tuttle and I were called as General Authorities, we taught together in the same building where I had attended seminary and then worked together as supervisors of seminaries and institutes of religion. They were administered by William E. Berrett.

Brother Berrett had opened the seminary in the Uintah Basin. During the summer he walked from town to town recruiting students for his class. Their first child was born and buried there. Brother and Sister Berrett rode to the cemetery in the backseat of a car. On his lap was the little wooden, unpainted casket he had built.

I knew Elijah Hicken, who was sent to the Big Horn Basin in Wyoming to open the seminary. He was not welcomed by a very rough crowd. A group threatened his life. The patriarch came with a blessing and a promise that his life would be protected. On the strength of that blessing, Brother Hicken took off the six-shooter he had worn to class each day.

In the 1950s we established stake boards of education. The story was told, quite possibly true, that one seminary teacher had a little difficulty convincing the stake leaders of the need to study the scriptures. He decided to give them a quiz to test their scriptural knowledge. The first question was, “Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?” That opened something of a debate.

Finally the stake president said, “Oh, what difference does it make who knocked down the walls? Just get them put back up! We’ll pay for
It out of stake funds.”

In England I attended a sacrament meeting. The seminary teacher, speaking on the subject of the scriptures, said, “I will now turn to Mosiah chapter 3 in the Doctrine and Covenants.” No one laughed. I knew we still had work to do.

When I first taught seminary, we had three textbooks—one each for Old Testament, New Testament, and Church history. In Brigham City we added a class in the Book of Mormon.

The Old Testament textbook was out of print and hard to find. When the monthly faculty group meeting was held in our building, we hid our textbooks. If we did not, these precious books would disappear.

We had a record player that played fourteen-inch Bible stories. We did not have a projector in the class.

**Curriculum**

Now you have course outlines, visual aids, equipment, and buildings. All are superior to anything before available.

Your curriculum is the same—the scriptures: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price. Other sources come from the living Prophets and Apostles. We are told in the revelation, when inspired by the Holy Ghost, their words take on the stature of scripture (see D&C 1:38).

**Be on Alert**

Now, again from my book of memories:

In the early 1930s, there grew up in some of the institutes a so-called superior scholarship. Secular approval, they thought, would bring more acceptance from those with whom they associated at the universities.

This attitude infected a number in the seminaries. Some work actually went forward to produce a curriculum focused on contemporary social values rather than revealed doctrine and scripture.

Several of the teachers went to obtain advanced degrees under eminent Bible scholars. They sought learning “out of the best books” (see D&C 88:118; 109:7, 14), but with too little faith. They came back having won their degrees but having lost touch with, and perhaps interest in, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

This pulling at the moorings by some teachers of religion did not go unnoticed in the councils of the Church. The Brethren became concerned. In 1938 all seminary and institute personnel were assembled for summer school at Aspen Grove.
President J. Reuben Clark Jr., speaking for the First Presidency, delivered a monumental address, “The Charted Course of the Church in Education.” It is as much an anchor today as it was the day that it was given. Surely you have read and do reread that charter. Now tonight as your teacher, I assign you to read it again. That is your homework.

I knew virtually all of those men who drifted off course. They found themselves in conflict with the simple things of the gospel. Some of them left and went on to prominent careers in secular education where they felt more comfortable. One by one they found their way outside Church activity and a few of them outside the Church. With each went a following of students—a terrible price to pay.

Over the years I have watched. Their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren are not numbered among the faithful in the Church.

That same thing happened again. In 1954 the seminary and institute teachers were called to a summer school at Brigham Young University. Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve was our teacher. For two hours a day, five days a week for five weeks, Elder Lee and others of the Twelve taught us. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. spoke to us twice. That pulled us back on course.

Happily, though, most of those who went away to study returned magnified by their experience and armed with advanced degrees. They returned firm in their knowledge that a man can be in the world but not of the world (see John 17:14–19).

Be careful! Without watch care such things can and have happened again. Each of you must be on alert. If you feel drawn to others who regard intellectual achievement to be more important than the fundamental doctrines, or who expose their students to the so-called realities of life, back away.

**In Harm’s Way**

When I was a boy, childhood diseases appeared regularly in every community. When someone had chicken pox or measles or mumps, the county health officer would visit the home and tack on the porch or put in the window a quarantine sign to warn everyone to stay away. In a large family such as ours, those childhood diseases would visit the home by relay, one child getting it from another, so the sign might stay up for many weeks.

When I was in junior high school in a health class, the teacher read an article. A mother learned that the neighbor children had chicken
pox. She faced the probability that her children would have it as well, perhaps one at a time. She determined to get it all over with at once. So she sent her children to the neighbor’s to play with their children to let them be exposed, and then be done with it. Imagine her horror when the doctor finally came and announced that it was not chicken pox the children had; it was smallpox.

“Teach Them the Word of God”

Now, I close the book of memories and come to here and now. I come to you as did Jacob when he taught in the temple, “having first obtained mine errand from the Lord” (Jacob 1:17). Jacob and his brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers over the people.

“And [they] did magnify [their] office unto the Lord, taking upon [themselves] the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon [their] own heads if [they] did not teach them the word of God with all diligence” (Jacob 1:19).

The world and the Christian churches have discarded the Old Testament, but it is there we find the nuggets of doctrine—such words as Aaronic, Melchizedek, priesthood, patriarch, Jehovah, ordinance, covenants, and so many more. They form essential links in our understanding of the plan of redemption.

From the New Testament the students learn the life and teachings of the Master.

Teach your students of the Apostasy and the Restoration of the priesthood, of Joseph Smith and the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by the Lord’s own declaration, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30).

Immerse them in the truths of the Book of Mormon. That will lead them to the test and to the promise that is there, and then they will be armed with the protective influence of the truth.

Each individual can then “ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true,” as the Book of Mormon invites them to do. Teach them to ask “with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, [and God] will manifest the truth of it unto [them], by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost [they] may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:4–5).

With an individual testimony, they will be safe in the world.
Much Depends on You

The world is spiraling downward at an ever-quickening pace. I am sorry to tell you that it will not get better.

It is my purpose to charge each of you as teachers with the responsibility—to put you on alert. These are days of great spiritual danger for our youth.

Morally Mixed-up World

I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now.

Words of profanity, vulgarity, and blasphemy are heard everywhere. Unspeakable wickedness and perversion were once hidden in dark places; now they are in the open, even accorded legal protection.

At Sodom and Gomorrah these things were localized. Now they are spread across the world, and they are among us.

I need not—I will not—identify each evil that threatens our youth. It is difficult for man to get away from it.

The First Line of Defense

You, with the leaders and teachers in the priesthood and auxiliaries, are not the first line of defense. The family holds that line. Satan uses every intrigue to disrupt the family.

The sacred relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, through which mortal bodies are conceived and life is passed to the next generation, is being showered with filth.

Surely you can see what the adversary is about. The first line of defense, the home, is crumbling.

The very purpose for the Restoration centers on the sealing authority, the temple ordinances, baptism for the dead, eternal marriage, eternal increase—centers on the family!

The Lord placed the responsibility upon parents first, saying: “Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. . . . And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” (D&C 68:25, 28).
There is “the shield of faith wherewith” the Lord said “ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (D&C 27:17).

The Armor Is Fitted at Home

This shield of faith is handmade in a cottage industry. What is most worth doing ideally is done at home. It can be polished in the classroom, but it is fabricated and fitted in the home, handcrafted to each individual.

Many do not have support in the family. When that shield is not provided at home, we must, and we can, build it. You and the leaders and teachers then become the first line of defense.

The Prophets Have Warned

We are now exactly where the prophets warned we would be.

In preparation for what is coming, the Lord warned, “In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation” (D&C 89:4).

Moroni spoke to us: “O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you. . . . Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation” (Ether 8:23–24).

Paul prophesied, “In the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Timothy 3:1), then word by word and phrase by phrase, described exactly what our present conditions are now. He spoke of “blasphemers, disobedient to parents, . . . unholy, without natural affection, . . . incontinent, . . . despisers of those that are good, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; . . . ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,” and other things (2 Timothy 3:2–4, 7).

Could he have described our plight more accurately? Read the prophecy very carefully.

The Power of Scriptures

Paul prophesied, also, that things will not get better. “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

Fortunately, he told us what to do about it: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto
salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:14–16).

In His supernal prayer for the Apostles, the Lord said, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:15–17).

A World Spiritually Diseased

Spiritual diseases of epidemic proportion sweep over the world. We are not able to curb them. But we can prevent our youth from being infected by them.

Knowledge and a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are like a vaccine. We can inoculate them.

_Inoculate:_ In—“to be within” and _oculate_ means “eye to see.” We place an eye within them—the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost.

Nephi told us that “angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you _all things_ what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3; emphasis added).

Narrow Way

It is a very narrow and straight path laid out for you teachers.

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

Your path as teachers may be broadened to include some worthy activities and cultural events. Activities are like spices and desserts that flavor a balanced meal. These must always be of the standard to reflect the gospel. Do not leave out the nourishing nutrients that build the spirit; it is not the entertainment that protects them.

The teaching of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ _must_ not be regarded as just one among your offerings. It is more important than any or all of the activities put together. You may provide them activities, but you must not leave the teaching undone.

The auxiliaries have been organized and have the responsibility for most of the activities. Teach your students to be faithful and active in the wards and branches and stakes, to have a deep regard for the priesthood leaders called to preside over them.

I repeat, the way is straight and narrow. You must not wander from it.
Have Faith—Courage

When our youth feel surrounded and outnumbered, remember what Elisha told his servant when he saw that “an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.” The servant was frightened and said, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” [Elisha] answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire” (2 Kings 6:15–17).

You are not responsible to cure the world’s environment. You can, with parents and priesthood and auxiliary leaders and teachers, send young Latter-day Saints out as leaven into the world, spiritually nourished, immunized to the influences of evil.

“The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one. . . . [You are] commanded . . . to bring up your children in light and truth” (D&C 93:36–37, 40).

A Defense and a Refuge

“The gathering together upon the land of Zion,” the Lord said, “and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth” (D&C 115:6).

They need not fear. We need not fear. Fear is the opposite of faith.

I have been in the councils of the Church and seen many things. I have seen disappointment and shock and concern. Never once have I seen any fear.

Our youth can look forward with hope for a happy life. They shall marry and raise families in the Church and teach their little ones what you have taught them. They, in turn, will teach their children and their grandchildren.

Isaiah and Micah prophesied: “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2–3; see also Micah 4:1–2).

In our day the house of the Lord has been established in the tops of the mountains, and nations do flow unto it. The word of the
Lord—the Old and New Testaments—has gone forth from Jerusalem. Now the law goes forth from Zion. And you are teachers of the law.

**We Will Not Fail**

We will not fail!

“How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33).

It has been fifty-nine years since I sat on that cliff on that tiny speck of an island in the Pacific Ocean and decided to be a teacher. I knew then that a teacher would not be rewarded with wealth; the reward is more lasting.

During those years, whole nations have been born and died as the evil one has worked his will. I have seen the borders of Zion enlarged to cover the whole earth (see D&C 82:14; 107:74).

I do not know now any more surely that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, than I did then as a soldier boy sitting on the cliff on that tiny speck of an island. There is one difference—now I know the Lord.

I bear witness of Him and invoke His blessings upon you who teach, as fathers and mothers, as grandfathers and grandmothers, upon your families, upon your classes, upon your work. I bless you that His power and inspiration will follow you in such a way that those who come within your influence will have that protective testimony born within them. I invoke this blessing upon you as a servant of the Lord and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

**Notes**

1. Extract from speech by Winston Churchill, August 20, 1940 (Churchill Papers).
The Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis (Moses 1), handwriting of John Whitmer; note subsequent corrections in handwriting of Sidney Rigdon and later verse number insertions by an unknown scribe.

Courtesy of Community of Christ Library-Archives.
“A Miracle from Day One”: Publication of the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts

Rebecca L. McConkie

Rebecca L. McConkie is a high-school English teacher in New York City with Teach for America.

Later this year, the Religious Studies Center will publish a volume called Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts, edited by Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews. To help readers understand the scope and purpose of this project, the Religious Educator held the following interview with two of the editors.

Religious Educator: What is the purpose of the project, and who is your intended audience?

Faulring: The purpose of this project is to bring, for the first time ever, a typescript and photographs of the original manuscripts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible to the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ.¹

Jackson: The intended audience is first, I think, people with academic interests because it is going to be an unedited transcription of the original documents. The second audience is nonacademics in the Church who have an interest in seeing a revealed text in its original form—a revealed text that has not been edited, polished, or corrected for consistency.

RE: How will religious educators be able to use this material?

Jackson: This material will give religious educators access to the original documents that they have never had before. For example, in the footnotes and appendix of the 1979 English Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible, we have more than six hundred verses
that we have changes for, and all of those changes will be accessible to readers in their original form.

Faulring: Readers will be able to see those changes in context and see how they were done. For example, they will be able to see whether a change was written out in full or in the shortened notation system, in which the Prophet marked the location of a change in his Bible and then dictated to his scribes only the revised words.

Jackson: We do not have all of Joseph Smith’s changes in the footnotes of the current edition of the Latter-day Saint Bible. I think the selections made for the JST footnotes are excellent. The Scriptures Publication Committee went after the changes that have doctrinal and historical significance, but there is a lot of other rich information that is not contained in the footnotes. For example, the Prophet frequently modernized King James Version language and reworded many sentences to make the Bible read more easily. Most Church members are not aware of that because the footnotes contain only things that are of a doctrinal or historical significance.

RE: What have you learned from this project, and how does this knowledge add to our study of the Bible?

Faulring: As a historian, I have learned that Joseph Smith, off and on in a three-year period, devoted as much time as he could to studying the Bible and making changes in it. The Prophet was learning as he was going through this process. As he said, it was a branch of his calling. It was part of his development as a prophet, and it happened early on in the Church, from 1830 to 1833. If you look in the Doctrine and Covenants, most of the revelations were received during that time. And revelation often came when Joseph Smith had a question, prayed, asked for an answer, and received it. Brother Robert J. Matthews has shown that there is an interrelationship between the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, both historical and doctrinal.

Jackson: We have a better grasp on that interrelationship now than we did before because we have been able, mostly through Scott’s work, to establish better dating than we ever had before. In this book, we have additional historical sources that have never been published in this context that give us an indication of how the translation was progressing. This gives us a better ability to correlate the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants with the material in the JST. So historically it does a lot.
Personally, my appreciation for the JST has grown enormously since working with this project. I marvel at the great inspiration of the Prophet Joseph Smith in being able to dictate something as flawless as Moses chapter 1, requiring virtually no editorial revising of any kind after it was first dictated, and to be so full of new doctrinal content and doctrinal revelation that it made a vital contribution to the Restoration. My own appreciation of this has grown very much, and I think other people, as they have access to the original sources, are going to have the same experience.

RE: What prompted the project, and how long has it been under way?  
Faulring: From my perspective, it was the condition of the manuscripts. The manuscripts had been stored in a bank safe in Kansas City for many years. When the new Community of Christ temple was built in Independence, they attached the Temple School, which houses a library-archive, and the manuscripts were kept there in a vault in a temperature-controlled archive. But the manuscripts themselves had already suffered some deterioration.

My research on Oliver Cowdery led me to the manuscripts initially. The first nine pages, and five lines on the tenth page, are in Oliver’s
handwriting. I worked with Ronald Romig, the RLDS Church archivist, who let me work with the originals. Knowing my previous use of the microfilm and a printout of the microfilm, he felt that it was justified to let me work with the original. As I worked with the original, little shards of paper along the edge would flake off. Of course, I was handling these with the utmost care, but the manuscripts were dry and brittle. They were not totally falling apart, but, for example, on page one of the first Old Testament manuscript, there were six pieces of yellowed tape that had been put on years ago holding pieces of the page together. Out of a natural concern on my part, I said to Mr. Romig, “Something really needs to be done with these manuscripts.” He confided in me that the RLDS archives had a staff of only two people—him and an assistant archivist. He was being very honest and said, “We don’t have the time, the talent, the money, to do what would be required to really preserve these manuscripts.” Just three months prior to having this discussion with Mr. Romig, I had a discussion with Richard E. Turley Jr., head of the LDS Church Historical Department. I asked Brother Turley if our archives would be willing to help the RLDS conserve their manuscripts, and almost without hesitation Brother Turley said, “Yes, we’d cooperate with them.”

The conversation I had with Brother Turley was in October. The following January, I had the above conversation with Ron Romig. It probably lasted no more than fifteen minutes, and Mr. Romig asked me to make a research proposal that included doing conservation work, digitally imaging the manuscripts, and photographing them both before and after the conservation work. It was important that we photographed them before, because when the LDS Church Archives conservation lab soaked the manuscripts to loosen up the tape (luckily, the tape was put on in an age when it was an organic-based adhesive), we did lose a little bit of text. So we scanned them, photographed them, and after the manuscripts got to Salt Lake, they were microfilmed again. Perhaps most significantly, the RLDS Church gave us the right to publish the manuscripts for the first time.

In January 1995, I wrote the proposal, and within two or three weeks of returning from the RLDS archives, I received a letter granting me permission to proceed. I knew I could not do it alone; I needed help in terms of people, equipment, and money. I approached Religious Education at Brigham Young University, and I was directed to Kent Jackson, who was director of publications at the Religious Studies Center (RSC). I also involved the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) and the LDS archives. I thought it
would take many months to get all the parties to agree on a project concept. But in an amazing three months, we were able to get the LDS archives to speak with their General Authority advisers.

The RSC and FARMS provided funding for me and Steve Booras of FARMS to travel to Independence. Steve had just returned from Jerusalem, where he was working with the Dead Sea Scrolls. His work on the Dead Sea Scrolls is what gave me the idea of digitally imaging the documents. During the two-week period that Steve and I were in Independence, Steve did the photography on the manuscripts, and I did the scanning. On average, the scanning took about six minutes per page. Now take that six minutes and multiply it by 464 pages. Add

*Kent P. Jackson (left, professor of ancient scripture) and Robert J. Matthews (emeritus professor of ancient scripture), two editors of the upcoming book on the Joseph Smith Translation original manuscripts*
It was then proposed that we create a new transcription. Robert Matthews had painstakingly created a transcription back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but we created a new electronic transcription. We had access to his, but we didn’t reproduce his; we started fresh. It took my wife, Barbara, and me about a year and a half, reading the image off one computer screen with the typescript in the other. It was a very painstaking, laborious process. In historical and documentary editing, the rule of thumb is that a manuscript should be read three times. Don’t just transcribe it, look at it once, and publish it. You go through it three times. My wife and I did the initial rough transcription, and then Brother Jackson and his student editors in the RSC worked through it thoroughly and repeatedly—I think letter by letter on a computer monitor.

It was a very humbling experience to work even just with the scanned images. It is also very humbling to be able to touch the original manuscripts and work with the actual text, the actual handwriting, and to see the different scribes, whether it was Oliver Cowdery or John Whitmer or Emma Smith. One particularly memorable experience took place in July of 1995. Brother Matthews and I went back and did a physical description, side by side, measuring and examining each page. There are two lines at the bottom of page 11 of the first Old Testament manuscript that slant upward. We thought that the handwriting changed. Brother Matthews said, “You know, this could be Emma.” It was just thrown out as a suggestion. Rather than stop right there in the RLDS archives, where they had many samples of Emma Smith’s handwriting, we just kept going. We had too much work to do in that one-week period.

A couple of months after I got back, I selected multiple samples of Emma’s handwriting and took the material home with me and sat at my kitchen table. Within about an hour and half, I think I had seventy-eight identical matches of Emma’s handwriting. Her capital E’s for Enoch looked the same as when she signed her name Emma. The way she wrote the word to, she would flip the cross over on the t; it was just a very unique style. Her capital I’s—I could go on and give you all these different styles, but when I made that identification, I was so thrilled, for here we have two full pages, plus a little bit more, of the only example I know of female handwriting in the Latter-day Saint scriptures. It fulfilled that promise given to Emma in the Doctrine and Covenants that she would assist her husband as a scribe (D&C 25:6).

This project has taken ten years, but that is because we are working with high-resolution imaging.
with scripture. You don’t hurry along something this important.

Jackson: We always felt that this was a special project. The advantage that we had at the RSC was that I was able to hire as many people as we needed to help in the work. At one point, we had seven student editors working on the project in various ways, some working on the transcription but others working on related research projects. The technology allowed us to look at the individual words and the individual letters, and the scanned images allowed us to see the differences in ink and the erasures that are underneath the current words. We did that for many, many months over the course of a few years. On the wall in our office, we had pictures of each one of Joseph Smith’s scribes because we felt a kinship with them in assisting with the effort to bring forth the Joseph Smith Translation.

Our final pass through the entire manuscript was in three-person committees. We knew that we had to make final decisions and there would be differences of opinion, so we had an odd number. Our three-person committees had to vote—sometimes it was two for the letter a and one for the letter o. I also made a few trips back to Independence to look at the original manuscripts—Scott did as well. I found it to be the case that we could see the material much better on the scanned images than we could on the actual manuscripts with the natural eye, even with a magnifying glass. That took a lot of time, and the process of getting the book finally ready for publication has taken a great deal of time as well. Our objective with the transcription was to make it as clean as possible. The manuscript pages are, in some cases, highly edited by multiple hands, and our objective was to develop a system that makes them as simple as possible to read and understand. We wanted to present the inspired text with as much dignity and reverence as we possibly could. We believe we have succeeded.

The book is absolutely unique. It contains several introductory essays that highlight our recent research into the JST. In the course of our research, we learned many new things that will be published in the book for the first time. We discovered that some of our earlier assumptions and interpretations were wrong, and we discovered that we still have much to learn. The book has about a thousand photographs in it, little verses out of Joseph Smith’s Bible. In part of the translation, the Prophet marked the insertion points in his Bible and then dictated only the changed words to his scribes, who would note them on the manuscript. In those instances, we have actual photographs in the book of each of the verses that the Prophet made corrections to. We photographed about a thousand of them right out of his Bible. The book is
over eight hundred fifty pages long. It is a big book in a large format.

Faulring: It is a typescript facsimile. It is going to be line by line, page by page. Next year we will produce a compact disc, and through any browser you will be able to look at images of the actual manuscripts. So as you are looking at the book, you can call up the typescript in one frame, the manuscript in others. You can even enlarge just the manuscript, so you will have the best of both worlds.

RE: Is there anyone else who contributed time or money to the project?

Faulring: Brother Matthews has contributed his lifetime to the study of the Joseph Smith Translation. When Ron Romig first asked that I propose to do this project, the first thing I did when I got back to BYU was to let Brother Matthews know what the RLDS Church would allow us to do. I won’t say he was dumbfounded—he’s not the dumbfounded type—but I think he was highly surprised, almost skeptical to a point. In his years, I believe he said it took him fourteen years of trying to actually get access to a copy of the JST manuscripts. He got to see a copy in 1967; then in 1968 they let him work with the original manuscripts. So when I think of who has put the most into it, Brother Matthews has given a lifetime almost.

Jackson: It took him months to really believe that this project was going to happen. This was the answer to forty years of prayers on his part.

Faulring: And his patient diplomacy.

Jackson: Everything that is in this book is built on research that he started back in the 1960s, so he is the major contributor. There are others who have contributed a lot—the Church Historical Department, with the enormous expense of the preservation of the manuscripts. We have been blessed much by the generosity of the Community of Christ. Ron Romig, the archivist, has been very helpful. We need to pay tribute to the very skilled typesetting work of Tonya Facemyer of Deseret Book. She did a marvelous job of laying out the complete book from start to finish. We are also grateful to many student assistants, to Trent Davies, the designer of the compact disc, and to Religious Education and FARMS for putting up the money. This has not been an inexpensive project. A large portion of my salary over the past several years has gone into the production of this book. We are really confident it is going to be a blessing to the Church.

Faulring: Dale Heaps was the senior conservator at the LDS Church archives. To do conservation work is as much art as it is science.
Jackson: It was a world-class conservation job.

Faulring: Yes, he did such a marvelous job. Not only did he do the deacidification of the manuscripts but he also pieced them back together. We have photographs of the manuscripts when they were still together in gatherings, or folios, and the pages were still connected. At some point in the 1950s or 1960s—and we suppose it was probably because of microfilming—they cut the manuscripts. In some cases, the manuscripts were cut unevenly, and we have loose pages. Well, Brother Heaps was able to put the puzzle back together, and when he did that, rather than put the pages back into folios, he laid the sheets flat. Brother Heaps’s department had a machine that allowed them to encapsulate the manuscripts. I don’t know exactly how it works, but it runs over the top and the bottom of the pages very gently and places them between what Dale described as a microseal—a very fine seal with holes every few inches so the manuscript can breathe. The manuscript is not sealed in there; it is just protected. The manuscripts now lay flat, and they have been rejoined. Dale made special archival acid-free boxes to hold them. And he put them into slip cases that are just beautiful.

I am sure the project would not have happened without the support of Brother Turley and Steve Sorensen of the LDS Church Archives. I really have a testimony that my somewhat naïve, almost dumb, observation to Mr. Romig that the manuscripts were falling apart set off a whole chain of events that led to the conclusion here. It has been a miracle from day one.

I want to express my appreciation to Brother Jackson. I’m a historian, not a theologian, and Brother Jackson has been able to see things in the manuscripts that made sense to him. So it has been a good collaboration. And Brother Matthews—again, he is listed as the third editor, and I think when he gets his copy he is just going to hold it and say, “This is a miracle.” He appreciates and understands the importance of the Joseph Smith Translation. He never thought this could ever happen. RE

Note

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints changed its name to Community of Christ in 2001.

Courtesy of the authors.
Robert J. Matthews and His Work with the Joseph Smith Translation

Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid

Ray L. Huntington is associate department chair of ancient scripture at BYU. Brian M. Hauglid is an associate professor of ancient scripture at BYU.

In 1979, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published its edition of the King James Version of the Bible. The Scriptures Publication Committee decided to include portions of the Joseph Smith Translation in the new edition. For the first time, Latter-day Saints had access to Joseph’s inspired work in their own personal scriptures. Many Latter-day Saints may be unaware that the efforts to include the JST material in the new edition of the Bible were pioneered by Robert J. Matthews, former dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. Beginning in 1953, Brother Matthews began a letter-writing campaign to the RLDS Church (now called the Community of Christ), requesting permission to study the original JST manuscripts. Through his sustained efforts, the RLDS Church gave Brother Matthews permission to examine the manuscripts.

We feel there is a great need for Latter-day Saints to hear Brother Matthews’s story, which culminated in the decision of the Scriptures Publication Committee to include excerpts of the JST in our LDS edition of the Bible. As we conducted this interview, it became clear to us that the Lord raised up Robert J. Matthews to do this significant work.

Huntington: Brother Matthews, could you please give a brief historical overview of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible?

Matthews: The Prophet Joseph Smith began translating the Bible in June of 1830. He worked steadily, with some breaks in between, from June of 1830 to July 1833. So it took just over three years. During that time, he went all the way through the Old Testament and all

Joseph Smith began translating in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Then, because of persecution, the Prophet moved to the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York. The second portion of Genesis was done in Fayette. Then, he moved to Kirtland, and because of persecution at Kirtland they moved to Hiram, where most of the New Testament was done between September 12, 1831, and September 12, 1832. After completing the New Testament, he moved back to Kirtland, and it was in the upstairs of the Whitney store that he finally finished the Old Testament. The first scribe was Oliver Cowdery, and he wrote the first ten pages in Genesis, and that is pretty much what we have in the book of Moses, chapters 1 through 5. Then, Oliver was called on a mission, as you know, to the Lamanites in Missouri. John Whitmer became the scribe, and after that Emma was scribe for a little while, and then Sydney Rigdon came on the scene and remained the scribe for quite a long time. He is listed in Doctrine and Covenants 35:20, where the Lord says that Sydney was to write for Joseph. He was writing the JST, but then Sydney became ill after the persecution at Hiram when he was
dragged by his heels on the frozen ground. He didn’t write much after that, and Frederick G. Williams became the scribe. They were pretty much through the New Testament at that time, and Frederick G. Williams finished recording changes in the New Testament.

Joseph Smith wrote a little, but not much. It is hard to tell just what parts are his and what are not. His writing contribution is rather small. There is also, in addition to the handwritten manuscript, a large pulpit-sized edition of the King James Version of the Bible, published by H&E Phinney in Cooperstown, New York, in 1828. Oliver Cowdery purchased that Bible for $3.75 from the Grandin Bookstore in Palmyra. Someone—we don’t know whether it was Joseph or Oliver or who, maybe it was all of them—went through portions of it and made little marks, sometimes a check mark in front of a verse and then an indication within the verse where there needed to be a correction.

In the places where they marked the Bible, they just wrote the reference and then the correction in the manuscript—not the entire verse, just the correction; so both the marked Bible and the manuscript had to be used together.

After they moved to Nauvoo, the Prophet went through the manuscript again, editing it and getting it ready for the press, and there is quite a lot of information in the *Times and Seasons* indicating that they were planning to publish the JST in Nauvoo. That was where it was at the time Joseph was killed. I will make one similarity here. The JST was started in Harmony and then worked on in Fayette; that’s a little like the translation of the Book of Mormon. We talk about part of the Book of Mormon being translated upstairs in the Whitmer home. Well, so was part of the JST. The translations involved the same people, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Joseph Smith, and so on. So there is a little similarity there.

**Hauglid:** Brother Matthews, what does the manuscript look like?

**Matthews:** The paper is yellowed and has no lines. If it ever did have lines, they are not apparent. The ink, which was no doubt black at the time they were writing, has turned to a rich, dark brown. The pages are really quite attractive. They are kind of a tan paper with dark brown writing. The scribes wrote right out to the edge of the paper. You couldn’t put a pin sometimes between where the writing ends and the edge of the paper. The pages originally were fourteen inches by seventeen inches and then folded to make eight and one-half by fourteen. And they wrote on both sides of the paper.
Hauglid: How many pages?
Matthews: There are about four hundred fifty pages.

Huntington: Were all the corrections Joseph made to the Bible written only in the manuscript?
Matthews: Yes, the Bible doesn’t have any words of correction, just indications where corrections are to be made. They had two ways of translating. When they first started, they wrote the whole chapter in the manuscript, even the passages that didn’t need to be changed. They even wrote entire chapters that didn’t need any correction. That was very slow, so then they adopted a faster method, and that was to mark the Bible where corrections needed to be. Then all they wrote on the paper was the correction. That was much faster.

Huntington: When and where did the RLDS Church first publish the Joseph Smith Translation?
RJM: When the Prophet was killed, the manuscript and the marked Bible were at the Smith home. The RLDS Church was organized on April 6, 1860. In 1866, they decided that they ought to publish the Prophet’s translation of the Bible. So they organized a committee and went to Emma, and the spokesman for the committee was Joseph Smith III. He went to his mother and said, “Can we have the manuscript?” She said yes and gave him the manuscript. The headquarters of the RLDS Church at that time were in Plano, Illinois, and that is where they did the work on it. The Bible translation came off the press in 1867. I think that it was actually printed in Cincinnati. This original edition had no footnotes, cross-references, or anything. Then, in 1936, after a committee labored for several years, the RLDS Church published a teacher’s edition. This edition had a concordance, footnotes, cross-references, and a lot of things. That’s when they first officially called it the Inspired Version. Until then, it was officially called Holy Scriptures. In 1936, the teacher’s edition was called Holy Scriptures, Inspired Version, although many had begun to call it the Inspired Version.

It became evident that there were some typographical errors in the text of the 1867 JST, or Inspired Version, as they called it. So in 1944, the Reorganized Church published A New Corrected Edition. That caused alarm among Mormons in the West, because some thought the Reorganized Church had made new changes. Actually, what they were doing was comparing it to the manuscript and correcting the typos. I have found 342 typos in that first edition. This teacher’s edition was exactly the same text as the 1867 edition, and in 1944 they corrected
those. But in doing the corrections, they also made other errors, so they still had to make some more corrections in later editions, and then it was printed frequently off and on. The most recent edition was published in 1991.

**Hauglid:** Where were the JST manuscripts kept from the death of Joseph to the first publication of the Inspired Version in 1867?

**Matthews:** Well, interestingly enough, they were not kept in the RLDS Church archives because the Smith family considered them Smith family property. When Brigham Young and the others were leaving Nauvoo to come west, President Young sent Willard Richards to Emma to see if she would give him the manuscript and the Bible, and she said, “No, that’s not Church property. That’s our Smith family Bible, and that’s Smith property.” It was kept in Emma’s house, so that’s where Joseph Smith III went to get it. He went to Emma in the Mansion House in Nauvoo and got the manuscript. Emma’s house caught on fire two or three times, and Emma also lived in various places. She makes mention in a letter (which the Reorganized Church has and which I’ve read) and in writing to her son that the translation is a very precious manuscript. She said, “I really believe that’s why my house never burned down, that the Lord was protecting that manuscript.”

There is another note to add here. After the publication of the Bible, the headquarters of the Reorganized Church were moved to Lamoni, Iowa. In either 1907 or 1909, there was a major fire at Lamoni that burned most of the diaries, almost all of the other manuscripts, and almost all of the rare things at RLDS headquarters. Fortunately, the JST manuscript was at the home of one of the Smiths. So viewing it as Smith property may have saved the manuscript.

**Huntington:** Did the RLDS publish directly from the original manuscripts prepared by Joseph Smith and his scribes?

**Matthews:** No, they didn’t. The RLDS did the same thing that was done with the Book of Mormon. That is, the 1866 Publication Committee of the RLDS Church made an entire duplicate of the JST manuscripts. The Reorganized Church still has that. I’ve seen and handled it. It seems to be a good, faithful copy of the original. Every time you do anything by hand, you make a few little variations. So the type was set from the Committee Manuscript, not from the original.
Robert J. Matthews and His Work with the Joseph Smith Translation

During his visits to the RLDS Archives, Robert J. Matthews made a copy of the JST manuscripts using a manual typewriter; compare his typescript of Genesis 7:35-47 with the page on the left. Courtesy of Robert J. Matthews.
**Hauglid:** Where have the manuscripts been since the first publication in 1867?

**Matthews:** They had been kept in a trunk at Emma’s house. She moved from time to time. The trunk had a false bottom. I read in RLDS literature that the manuscripts were kept in this trunk that had a false bottom, so they were totally out of sight. For some reason, they didn’t always keep the Bible with the manuscript. They looked upon the manuscripts as very important and the Bible as more of a keepsake. Joseph’s son, Alexander Hale Smith, was given the Bible. He had that Bible in his library in his home in Lamoni. When his twenty-year-old daughter Elizabeth was married, her father said to her, “Any of my books that I have you’re welcome to as a wedding present.” She said, “I want grandfather’s Bible.” That’s the marked Bible. Alexander let out an “oh.” And she said, “Now you said . . .” So he gave Elizabeth the marked Bible. After their marriage, her husband wanted to move to San Bernardino, California. That was frontier country, so that Bible traveled out to San Bernardino, probably in a wagon. He was killed there in an accident, and she came back, bringing the Bible with her, and it was later that the manuscript and the Bible were put in the archives of the Reorganized Church. After Alexander Hale Smith died, the Bible was kept by Israel Alexander Smith, another one of the brothers, and the Bible and the manuscript were kept in his home until 1942. Then, the Bible and the manuscript were put in the archives of the Reorganized Church.

**Huntington:** How did the Bible and the manuscript become the property of the RLDS Church?

**Matthews:** Inside the cover of the Bible, there are two or three paragraphs telling about this. It doesn’t tell about San Bernardino, but it says on such a date Elizabeth Smith brought back the Bible and gave it to Israel Alexander Smith, and he donated it to the Reorganized Church.

**Huntington:** In the LDS Church we call the Prophet Joseph Smith’s work with the Bible the Joseph Smith Translation, or JST. My understanding is that it hasn’t always been called this. What have been some of the other names given to Joseph’s translation of the Bible?

**Matthews:** Well, it’s evident from reading the Doctrines and Covenants and also the *History of the Church* that the Prophet Joseph always called it the New Translation. Then, when the Reorganized Church published it, they called it Holy Scriptures. Then, in 1936, with the teacher’s edition, they tacked on the subtitle Inspired Version, and
that’s the way it was spoken of until the time when the LDS Church was working on the project of a new edition of the King James Version in the 1970s. We wanted to quote from the Prophet’s translation, but when you quote in footnotes, you have to have abbreviations. NT, which would mean New Translation, looks too much like New Testament, especially in a footnote, so it was ruled out. IV looks too much like a Roman numeral IV, so that was also ruled out. It was decided by the committee in the 1970s and presented to the First Presidency and the Twelve to call the Prophet’s work the Joseph Smith Translation, and the proper abbreviation would be JST.

Hauglid: When did you first become interested in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible?

Matthews: As a boy growing up in Wyoming, I was the last of a large number of children. Our family was active in the Church, but I never heard anybody ever talk about Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible. I didn’t know he had made one. On July 9, 1944, I had just graduated from high school, and I was sitting in the living room of my father’s home listening to Elder Joseph Fielding Smith give a lecture over KSL radio. He gave a series of lectures. On that day, he was speaking about the Godhead, and he quoted John 1:18, which says, “No man hath seen God at any time.” And then Elder Smith said, Joseph Smith corrected that verse by revelation, and when he said revelation, that word penetrated right into my soul. It was the word revelation that did it. It struck me. It didn’t hurt, but I knew that I’d been hit. Those lectures have since been published in a book called The Restoration of All Things, by Joseph Fielding Smith. That is how I know that experience took place on July 9, 1944, because I looked it up to see what day he had given that radio address. It was a deep feeling within me that Joseph Smith made some corrections in the Bible by revelation. Then, I began to want to know more. That fall I came to BYU as a student and went to Dr. Sidney B. Sperry and asked him if he knew that Joseph Smith translated the Bible, and he said, “Yes, we know, but we don’t know much about it.” So that was the beginning of my interest, and I never lost that feeling. Although months would go by and I’d never do anything about it, I always had a sustained interest in the Joseph Smith Translation. Through the years after that, I obtained a copy of the Inspired Version, published by the RLDS Church.

You know the name of N. B. Lundwall, who published a lot of Church books. I couldn’t find an Inspired Version in any bookstore, so I wrote to him. He said he could get me one. He also told me
something I had never known, and that is, he was a convert from the Reorganized Church. He got me my first copy of the Inspired Version, and I read the entire King James Version and Inspired Version, holding them side by side, reading a line from one and reading a line from the other. I went through both Bibles comparing every word. It took me several years, but I eventually did that.

_Huntington:_ When did you do that?

_Matthews:_ I did that between 1945 and 1950. That’s how I became acquainted with all of the changes. I had them marked in my Bible.

_Hauglid:_ Do you still have the Inspired Version that Brother Lundwall got for you?

_Matthews:_ Yes, I still have it. I was so interested in these changes, and I also noticed that they were the same as the book of Moses. So I would talk to people in my ward about these corrections Joseph Smith made. Everybody would say, “Oh, you can’t trust that. That’s the Reorganized Church. We don’t believe in that.” That’s the thing I heard most of all. “We don’t believe in that.” Everybody had the same thought: “It’s been changed by the Reorganized Church.” So I could see that if I was ever going to know what’s right and what’s wrong, I had to see the original manuscripts.

_Huntington:_ Could you describe the events leading up to your initial contact with the RLDS Church?

_Matthews:_ I remember talking to Dr. Sperry and Dr. James R. Clark about it. Brother Clark was the expert in the Church, or the expert at BYU, on the Pearl of Great Price. I remember asking him, “Is the book of Moses part of Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible?” I don’t say this to discredit him, because nobody knew. He said, “I don’t know.” I said, “Well, it reads just like the beginning of the RLDS publication.” He said, “Well, it could be, but we don’t know.” So in talking with Dr. Sperry and Dr. Clark, I realized that if I was ever going to get any truth about this thing, I had to see the original manuscripts.

_Huntington:_ Were you a teacher at BYU?

_Matthews:_ No, I was a student. Along the way, in 1955, I became a seminary teacher. I wrote a letter to the Reorganized Church to ask them if I could see the manuscript. They wrote back and said no.
**Hauglid:** When was that, Brother Matthews?

**Matthews:** Well, it took fifteen years, so it was back in 1953 when I first wrote to them.

**Huntington:** How often did you write to the RLDS Church requesting to see the manuscripts?

**Matthews:** Off and on. I didn’t write every week, but over a period of fifteen years I kept writing, and they kept writing back and saying no. I wrote to their historian. He said no. I wrote to the president of their church two or three times. I may have been a little too strong at one point. I said to him in one letter, “I’m not trying to deceive or trick anybody. You’re just a little church, and we’re a big church and if you really have confidence in your grandfather’s work” (he was the grandson of Joseph Smith), “if you really have confidence in your grandfather’s work, our people are never going to accept it until somebody from our church has seen the manuscript.” He wrote back and said, “I thank you for your plainness, but the answer is still no.” Then, I read in the *Deseret News* that their church historian had died and that the new historian was Richard Howard. He was a graduate of Berkeley in history. So I wrote him a letter and said, “If I came to Independence, would you show me the manuscript?” And he wrote back and said yes. I thought he didn’t understand, so I called him on the phone. He said, “Yes, yes. You can come.” That’s how I finally got to see the manuscript.

**Hauglid:** Who were your contact people at the RLDS Church?

**Matthews:** Well, I originally contacted their historian, whose name was Charles Davies, and he said no two or three times. I tried their president, who was W. Wallace Smith, and he said no two or three times. So the first real flesh-and-blood contact that I had was Richard P. Howard, who was a gentleman and a fine man and a good scholar. The first time I went there, he showed me the marked Bible.

**Huntington:** What year was your first visit to see the marked Bible?

**Matthews:** This was on June 20, 1968. The reason I was able to do that was that I was on a three-week lecture tour for BYU, and my last lecture was June 20, in Kansas City. That’s just seventeen miles from Independence. He brought out the marked Bible and showed me a photocopy of the manuscript—not the original but a photocopy. I said, “Well, this is really nice, but any chance to see the original?” He said, “No, that’s too precious.” I said, “Well, can I look at this?”
The earlier site of the RLDS Archives, where Brother Matthews studied the JST manuscripts and typed a transcript copy. Courtesy of Community of Christ.

The RLDS Auditorium where Brother Matthews did his research on the JST manuscripts. The archives were later moved to the RLDS temple, where they are presently located.
“Yes, you can look at it.” So I would read and read from the photocopy, and every once in a while I would find words that were crossed out and something written above it. Now, on a photocopy, everything was black and white. So I went to Richard Howard and said, “Richard, I need to look at the original manuscript to see whether the ink in the cross out and the new words written above are the same color as the rest of it.” He agreed. So he would get that original page of the manuscript, and I would look at it. So little by little, I began to have access to the manuscript. Then, after I’d been there a couple of trips, he would get the original manuscript and I would work straight from that. But it was a gradual thing.

_Hauglid: How many visits did you make to the RLDS archives? What took place in those visits?_

_Matthews: Altogether, it took thirteen visits from 1968 to 1974, and except for the first one, which was only one day, I stayed a week for each of the other twelve visits. I would get there on Monday, be at their office when they opened at eight in the morning, stay all day until they closed at night, and stay a week. They were not open on Saturdays, so I would be there Monday through Friday. Sometimes I would go a whole year or several months in between without a visit. I copied all the marks that were in the marked Bible that we’ve talked about. I went to their bookstore downtown and bought a King James Version of the Bible. Then, with the large, marked Bible of Joseph Smith, I copied every mark from that Bible into my King James Version. I didn’t count how many, but I kept track of the time. It took seventeen hours of diligent marking to copy every cross out, every check mark, every circle, and every item.

There is one interesting thing about Joseph Smith’s Bible. It does not contain any of the words of the correction, but frequently in the margin he would write, “This is my book” and sign “Joseph Smith.” Across the top of the page he’d write, “Joseph Smith Jr.” Once he wrote in the margin, “O Lord, bless Oliver.” So there were little things like that. It authenticates the book. I copied all of those.

_Hauglid: Do you still have your copied Bible?_

_Matthews: Oh yes. I’ve also copied the changes into five other Bibles since then. Another thing I did, having read the entire printed JST, was to compare it to the King James before I ever made any of these visits. I had certain questions, and so I would turn and find the original for each of those statements. Then, after I got all of that satisfied, they let me use their typewriter and they provided the paper, and
I typed the entire manuscript, line by line—in other words, a line of writing in the manuscript made one line of typing. So I have a complete copy, line for line of the original JST manuscript.¹

_Huntington:_ All four hundred and something pages?

_Matthews:_ Yes. There are two Old Testament manuscripts, and there is a set of New Testament manuscripts. It works like this. The first draft is not punctuated or versed. The second draft is revised in words, plus you can tell it is being prepared for a printer because it often has versification, chapter headings, and so on. So there are two Old Testament and two New Testament manuscripts. Then, they had an additional Old Testament manuscript, just a few pages. It went through about seven chapters of Genesis, which they thought to be the first draft, but it has since been decided that that little short manuscript was probably John Whitmer’s own personal copy.

_Huntington:_ How did your interest and research with the JST manuscripts contribute to the LDS publication of the King James Bible in 1979?

_Matthews:_ When I was doing this work with the Reorganized Church, I never felt I was doing it for anybody but myself. It turned out that it was good I felt that way because every once in a while the RLDS leaders, such as Richard Howard and one-time President Wallace Smith (president of their church), said to me, “Whom do you represent?” I said, “I don’t represent anybody. This is my own personal interest.” That way they let me keep coming. If I had been a representative of the Church, I don’t think they would have let me do it.

_Huntington:_ Describe the relationship between the RLDS Church and our church at the time you were making your visits to their headquarters in Independence.

_Matthews:_ There really wasn’t much exchange of research between the RLDS library and our Church library. There just wasn’t a feeling of cooperation there. At least, that is the way it appeared to me. But they were very nice to me, and I wasn’t trying to tell them anything that wasn’t true. I was totally honest with them, and they believed me. They were very formal at first, but it loosened up as time went along. I did talk with Elder Bruce R. McConkie about the work I was doing with the JST because he was very interested in it. So I did talk with him about it. When the time came to make this new edition of the Bible, the Brethren organized the committee, but they did not dictate what to put in it. The Bible Committee spent the first
year deciding what to include. The question came up, should we have excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation? And it was talked back and forth and decided yes. Well, I already had a typewritten copy of most of the manuscript. I hadn’t finished it by then because this Bible Committee began in 1971. I had it well under way, and they knew that I had been all through it and that I had a relationship back there and one thing and another. So I think, although I didn’t start out with it in mind, my work with the Reorganized Church did a few things. First, it established a liaison between us. Second, I knew them personally, and they knew me, and we trusted each other. Third, I had considerable information about the manuscript that no other LDS member had. So when it came to making the new LDS edition of the Bible, they asked me to be the one to help put the JST in the new LDS edition of the Bible.

_Huntington_: Who was the chair of that committee?

_Matthews_: Elder Thomas S. Monson, because it worked by seniority. Elder Monson, Elder Boyd K. Packer, and Elder Bruce R. McConkie were the three main members of that committee.

_Hauglid_: Was this the Scriptures Publications Committee?

_Matthews_: Yes. Elder Monson had the seniority of the three, and he was automatically the chairman.

_Hauglid_: Who contacted you about helping them?

_Matthews_: I don’t remember, probably Elder Monson. The first meeting I attended was with Ellis Rasmussen, Elder Monson, Elder Packer, and Dan Ludlow. Dan was an important contributor, even though he was never really a formal member of the committee. But he was chairman of Correlation, and this was a Correlation project.

_Huntington_: So the manuscript that was used for placing the JST excerpts into the LDS King James Bible was taken from the typed manuscript that you copied from the original. Is that correct?

_Matthews_: Well, yes and no. What we did was this: I bought two printed copies of the RLDS Inspired Version, because they are printed on both sides, you know. So you had to have two copies because if you cut something off one side and you want something on the other side, you have to have another copy. I would cut out from a printed edition of the Inspired Version a passage that we wanted and glue it to a piece of paper. Then, I would cut out the verse from the King James
that are with child and unto them that give suck in those days therefore ye
and pray ye the Lord that your flesh be not in the winter neither
days
on the Sabbath day for them in those days shall be great tribulation
and upon
the Jews the inhabitants of Jerusalem such as was not before upon Israel of the world their reign till
since the beginning of the world to this time nor nor ever shall
sent again upon Israel
be and except these days should be shortened all these things are
the beginnings of sorrows and except those days should be shortened
no according to the covenant there should flesh be saved but for the elect save those days
shall be shortened behold those things I have spoken unto you after
concerning the Jews and then immediately the tribulation which shall come upon Jerusalem you of those days if any man shall say unto you here is Christ or there
believe him not for in those days there shall also arise false
Christ and false prophets and shall show great signs and won
ners incog that if possible they shall deceive the very elect
who are the elect according to the covenant behold I speak the
things to you for the elects sake and you also shall hear
of wars and rumors of wars see that ye be not troubled for
all I have told you must come to pass but the end is not
yet behold I have told you before wherefore if they shall say un
to you behold he is in the desert go not forth behold he is in the
secret chambers believe it not for as the light of the morning
and cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west as covereth
the whole earth so shall also the coming of the son of man be and now I shew unto you a parable behold wheresover the
carcass is there will the Eagles be gathered together so likewise (end of p. 57)

Page 56-A (Matt. 24:28b - 15a)
shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the
earth and they shall hear of wars and rumors of wars beho
Version and put it above the section from the Inspired Version and show at what point we wanted the JST to contribute to it. You could say the manuscript that was used was the printed Inspired Version, but I had inspected the printed RLDS Inspired Version by comparing it with the original manuscript, and I had a copy of my comparison. So, depending on how you interpret that, you could say the originals were the source, but the originals stayed in Independence, Missouri. The typesetter actually worked from the printed Inspired Version. So I had stacks and stacks of paper, eight and one-half by eleven, with King James Version passages pasted above passages from the JST and where the call letter a, b, or c should be and then how much of the JST should be included. That’s how it was done.

**Huntington:** But you had made corrections to their published Inspired Version that you used based on the original?

**Matthews:** Yes, but it didn’t take many. The printed RLDS Inspired Version is very accurate.

**Huntington:** That’s important to note.

**Matthews:** I think one of the important things out of everything I learned was that the printed Inspired Version is quite accurate. If the manuscript is accurate, the printed edition is accurate. They followed the manuscript quite carefully. There are a few little things.

**Hauglid:** Joseph made over three thousand changes or corrections to the Bible; isn’t that correct?

**Matthews:** Yes, there are 3,410 verses of the JST that are different from the KJV.

**Hauglid:** And the Scriptures Publications Committee used about one-third of those changes in our edition of the King James Version?

**Matthews:** Yes, that’s pretty close. A little more than one-third. When we were putting the cross-references and footnotes into the Bible, there was no need to do anything with the book of Moses. The book of Moses has 335 verses, I think, so we already had that many. Then we have Joseph Smith—Matthew; I think that has about fifty-five more verses. So we have approximately four hundred verses already in one of our standard works, the Pearl of Great Price. There was no need to duplicate any of those. We have in the footnotes and in the appendix in the back of our Bible about eight hundred more. That’s a little more than one-third. When we say there are 3,410 verses, a verse might have
five or six changes in it. So there are that many verses of the JST that differ from the King James. That’s according to my count, and every now and again I make mistakes.

**Hauglid:** Why don’t we have all of the corrections Joseph made in our standard works?

**Matthews:** I think there are at least three reasons. A major reason is that it is copyrighted by the Reorganized Church, and we felt that they wouldn’t give it up to us just for the asking. Second, there wasn’t space. In the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible, other things were demanding space and attention, so we didn’t have space to reproduce the entire JST in there. And we didn’t want to reproduce the book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew. So those were two good reasons. I think a third reason is that some of these changes were a change of “wherefore” to “therefore.” That’s not a major doctrinal change, and there didn’t seem to be justification for putting that in. There’s another thing, too, and that is if you’re reading a whole paragraph and the corrections are in the paragraph, the context is clear. But when you take one word and put it in the footnote at the bottom of the page, you lose some of the context. There were, sometimes, little nuances in the JST that we felt weren’t valuable enough to merit a place in the new Bible.

**Huntington:** Did the Scriptures Publications Committee need to get permission from the RLDS Church to include the changes that we used in our edition of the King James Bible?

**Matthews:** I don’t know if we had to or not, but we did. The Brethren are very interested in maintaining relationships. The committee said to me, “Sometime when you’re in Missouri, sit down with their historian and show him every one of the passages that we want to use and see if we can get permission to do that.” I did that; I took him a list.

**Huntington:** This was Richard P. Howard?

**Matthews:** Yes, this was Richard P. Howard. I had a typewritten list. I said, “We’d like to use all of these things.” He said, “Well, I’m sure that’s all right. I’ll have to get it cleared.” So they worked it out between the two publishing houses, between Deseret Book and Herald House, which is the RLDS publishing house. It’s all written up properly, and for the exchange of one dollar paid to the RLDS Church, to make it a legal document, Deseret Book got permission to use those corrections. I feel that if we had asked for everything, if we had said to
them, “We want everything in the JST,” they might have said no, and maybe we would not have anything. But we thought that it was in the part of good judgment to get those that were most doctrinal, and, in fact, I wrote up a list of principles governing what we wanted to use. If it dealt with priesthood, if it dealt with the Atonement, if it dealt with the house of Israel or any other doctrinal concept, we wanted it. This list was published in an Ensign article in June 1992.2

Hauglid: Did your work with the JST result in any contribution to the other standard works?

Matthews: Yes, it did in several ways. One is that some of the headings in the Doctrine and Covenants now mention the JST when they didn’t used to. There are also footnotes in the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants that use the JST. Plus, I had noticed through the years that sometimes almost the identical words, half a sentence or so, would be in the Doctrine and Covenants, as it appeared in the JST and often similar doctrines, but I didn’t know which came first. It was the popular view of many people that after he had a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith would then go the Bible and correct it. I discovered by working with the manuscript that it was just the opposite. I noticed when I first saw the manuscript that there were frequent dates at the top or the middle of the page. I also noticed that the handwriting changed from one scribe to the other from time to time. None of that was interesting at first to me, but as time went along and I became more familiar with the JST and with the manuscript, I realized that according to the dates that are written in the manuscript, some of those concepts were revealed in the JST before they appeared in the Doctrine and Covenants. One is the age of accountability, which shows up in the JST chapter of Genesis 17 in about April 1831. It doesn’t show up in the Doctrine and Covenants until November 1831 in section 68. That’s just one example. There are maybe a dozen such instances, where things occurred in the manuscript of the JST at an earlier date than they occurred in the Doctrine and Covenants.

So that gave me, and I have tried to persuade others, a whole new view of the historicity of the Doctrine and Covenants and its relationship to the JST. They are not two entirely separate books; they’re interwoven. They are not just two books with similar roots; they have the same root—revelation. Many of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were stimulated and initiated by passages in the JST—section 76 is a major one, but there are others such as sec-
tion 91 and much of section 88. You know, Scott Faulring and Kent Jackson have been doing a very careful study of the manuscript. One of the things they have been able to do that I was not able to do is to determine more carefully just when certain portions of the JST were actually made. They discovered that large portions of it were earlier than we had known before. So the concept of being a forerunner to the Doctrine and Covenants is even stronger now than it was when I did it. I had grasped the idea, but they have provided a great amount of confirming evidence. That, I think, is a major thing.

Then, too, in the new edition of the Pearl of Great Price, you notice each chapter of the book of Moses has a heading as to when it was received. That didn’t used to occur in the former editions of the book of Moses, since they had some of the wrong dates. We were able to correct the dates.

_Huntington:_ Did those new dates come from your work on the JST?
_Matthews:_ Yes.

_Hauglid:_ The LDS Church had the opportunity a few years ago to clean and preserve the JST manuscripts and marked Bible. What can you tell us about that?

_Matthews:_ I was not directly responsible for that exchange of work, but perhaps I did open the door between the two churches for research and study. In 1995, the Reorganized Church made an agreement for our church’s Historical Department to do some conservation work. They washed them. Somebody through the years had patched some of the JST manuscripts with mending tape. You know mending tape that long ago would get brittle and go dark. Our manuscript experts in Salt Lake City removed that tape. They put the manuscripts in mylar folders, each one of them. Some places where pages had crumbled and wrinkled along the edges have been repaired. There were some repairs to the marked Bible. The cover was worn. They put a new cover on it. It has had two good effects. First, the manuscripts are much cleaner, and you can read them now where the tape had once been. Second, some of the pages had become wrinkled. They would wet them and straighten them and let them dry straight, so they really have preserved them.

A number of years ago there was a major exchange of documents between the two churches. Again, I didn’t broker that, but I may have had something to do with it, as I said before, opening the door so that there was more contact between the two churches. But there was a major exchange. The Reorganized Church had some letters and docu-
ments that we wanted. We had things that they wanted. The exchange between the two churches was written up in the *Church News*, and it was quite interesting.

I was talking to President Alvin R. Dyer one day about that. He said, “Well, we gave them more then they gave us. They got the better of the deal.” I was back in Independence, and I was talking to Richard P. Howard one day, and Richard said, “You know, we gave you more than you gave us. You got the better of the deal.” I thought, “Well, isn’t that interesting?” I didn’t tell them what the others had said. I talked with Elder McConkie about it. He said, “Who cares? They got what they wanted; we got what we wanted. Who cares who got the better deal?” I thought that was impressive.

**Huntington:** What other benefits came to you and others as a result of your contact with the RLDS Church?

**Matthews:** I probably never would have made so many trips to Missouri had it not been that my attention was focused on that manuscript. As a result of going there, I became very well acquainted not only with the work of Joseph Smith and with the Bible but also with many other things. For one thing, I became more acquainted with the geography of Missouri. Not every trip, but often, when I was in Independence, we would take side trips over to Liberty, Adam-ondi-Ahman, or Far West. We’d go to Richmond and visit the cemeteries. Sometimes I did that alone. Sometimes I did that with Larry C. Porter and Richard L. Anderson.

During other trips I would visit with the Reorganized Church historian, and I got their views about a lot of things, so it was very helpful as far as what it did for me in understanding that period in Church history. I was able to read many letters written by Joseph Smith III and got his views about several things. I met some very fine people such as Richard P. Howard, the RLDS historian. I met W. Wallace Smith, who was the president of the RLDS Church and the grandson of Joseph Smith. I met Wallace B. Smith, who was Wallace’s son and a future president of the RLDS Church. My first visit there I met a man, a member of the RLDS First Presidency named F. Henry Edwards, and he was very pleasant; he was an Englishman and very talkative. He had married one of Joseph Smith III’s daughters, so his children were descendants of Joseph Smith, and I met two of his sons, one Lyman Edwards and another Paul Edwards. They are both rather prominent in leadership in the RLDS Church, particularly in the academic area. It was wonderful to meet and discover what good and hospitable people
they are. So through it all, as the years went by, I became acquainted with an RLDS archivist named Ronald E. Romig, who’s been to BYU several times, and one of his assistants, Barbara Bernauer. I became friends with them and appreciated their hospitality. Also, the Reorganized Church’s current historian, Mark Shearer, is a very special man. On one of my early visits, there was a young man who worked in their Historical Department by the name of Grant McMurray. He was a young, slender, gracious, friendly man, and he’s now president of their church. About a year ago at one of their conferences, he quoted me, and I thought that was rather amazing.

What other benefits besides the JST have come to me? I feel like I am much more acquainted with Church history during the Missouri era than I would have been had I never been there. I met some very fine people and also learned much more about the death of Joseph Smith and the burial and moving of Joseph’s and Hyrum’s bodies from one place to the other. They have a much more detailed account of that than we have in our records, and I have been fortunate enough to read the RLDS materials, so it has been good for me in many ways.

**Hauglid:** What would you most like the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to know about the Joseph Smith Translation?

**Matthews:** As I indicated earlier, when I was doing this work, I never thought I had a message for anybody; I was deeply and sincerely interested in Joseph Smith’s work with the Bible. But as the years have gone by, I have been able to see that it had some intrinsic value for members of the LDS Church, not only as a historical thing, but I’d like the members of both churches to be thoroughly convinced that Joseph Smith’s work with the Bible was a very important doctrinal work. I would like them to know that it was true, that it is important, that his work with the Bible was a command from the Lord. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord frequently tells him to do it. There is a great lesson for all of us in that because in reading the Bible and concentrating, praying, and meditating, the Prophet Joseph received revelation. That is the way the Lord teaches the gospel to His people. When you study the scriptures, you are going to learn and receive revelation.

The Prophet Joseph was inspired to make many corrections and alterations, as well as to add much new background information in various places in the Bible. Reading the JST is like having Joseph Smith for a study companion because you get his views on how he understood certain things. I think the JST has been underappreciated by many people in both churches but, particularly, I think, by our people,
because it was not brought to Utah, and then when it was published it was done by the Reorganized Church, so for some it had a little cloud hanging over it. I hope now that cloud has vanished. I think even our scholars have barely understood that the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible has a very direct relationship to the Doctrine and Covenants, to the doctrines that we believe in the Church. I have frequently said that every person who has joined the Church since 1831 has been affected by the JST, even though he or she did not know it. It was in the JST where the revelation was first given on the age of accountability for baptism. Then, in 1832, the revelation on the three degrees of glory was an outgrowth of his work with the Bible. Most of what we know about Adam and Melchizedek and eternal marriage and priesthood organization originated in the JST. There are many things that were outgrowths of revelation received while he was working with the Bible. It is a very prominent and important part of our history, and it ought to be a part of our present understanding. With the footnotes and the appendix in our edition of the Bible, I think the decision has already been made by the Brethren that the JST should be a part of our scripture study. Had it not been so, it would never have been put in this new edition of the Bible.

Robert J. Matthews’s Trips to Work on the Joseph Smith Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>November 1–6, 1968</td>
<td>With Larry C. Porter. While Brother Porter did this research, I copied all the markings from the Joseph Smith Phinney Bible into a copy of the King James Bible I bought for this very purpose. It required seventeen hours of diligent work. Examined the marked Bible carefully. Also worked with photocopies of the handwritten manuscript.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 27–August 3, 1969</td>
<td>With Richard L. Anderson. While Richard did his research, I spent all week reading and making handwritten notes from the Inspired Version manuscript (photocopy).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robert J. Matthews and His Work with the Joseph Smith Translation

Visit | Date | Purpose
--- | --- | ---
4 | September 7–12, 1969 | For the first time I examined the original manuscripts, beginning on September 12, my forty-third birthday. Began typing the manuscript (New Testament 1). Did nearly one hundred pages this week. Working with originals was a great thrill.

5 | February 7–14, 1970 | Spent most of the week with the RLDS 1866 committee manuscript. Also compared my copy of the Bernhisel manuscript with the originals, identifying passages and manuscript sources.

6 | Week of August 4, 1970 | Continued copying the manuscript all week in both Old and New Testaments.

7 | Week of November 4, 1970 | Continued copying the manuscript all week, including Acts through Revelation. Also met BYU Religious Education faculty and MHA persons at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, and visited Missouri sites with them. At the time, I was still employed by seminaries and institutes.

8 | June 19-26, 1971 | Typed Old Testament manuscript from Isaiah through Malachi. Also visited with President W. Wallace Smith and his counselor, President F. Henry Edwards.

9 | Week of April 11, 1972 | Spent all week copying the Old Testament manuscript from Exodus through 1 Kings.

10–12 | Exact dates not recorded | Made three trips to Independence, checking my typescript with the originals and also reading letters, diaries, publications, and Inspired Version articles in the *Saints’ Herald*.

13 | January 3-10, 1974 | Worked all week in RLDS Library copying and comparing my typescript with the original and reading from Joseph Smith III letterbook.

Notes

1. In late 2004, the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University will publish a new transcription of all the original manuscript pages of the Joseph Smith Translation. Brother Matthews is one of the editors of this project. See Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004).

Ray L. Huntington (left) and Brian M. Hauglid (right) visit with Ronald E. Romig about the JST manuscripts and the work of Robert J. Matthews.

Courtesy of the authors.
Huntington: We certainly appreciate the opportunity of meeting with you. Many of our readers may not know who you are, so it might be nice if you could briefly tell us a little about yourself.

Romig: I grew up in the neighborhood of the Kirtland Temple in northern Ohio in the midst of a caring church community (RLDS) that was trying to promote the kingdom. When you grow up with those kinds of associations, it gets hold of you. So I just sort of knew that my life’s work would be in association with the church, and I always enjoyed the history of the church as well. So that prompted my studies in the social sciences (history) with a teaching degree. When the previous church archivist retired, I saw an opportunity to work for the church.

Huntington: Was the retiring archivist Richard Howard?

Romig: Richard Howard was the church historian when the first archivist was hired by the Community of Christ, who happened to be Grant McMurray, now the president of the Community of Christ. The second church archivist, the one who preceded me, was Madeline Brunson. Madeline worked as church archivist for about ten years before she retired in 1988. Then I was hired. I had the opportunity to work closely with Dick Howard until his retirement in 1994. Before I became the church archivist, I had done quite a bit of research with primary documents in Utah.
Hauglid: What type of research were you doing in Salt Lake City?
Romig: I started research about the same time the RLDS Church began seriously thinking about building this facility [the temple]. I had a great interest in understanding the early history of Independence and what had been envisioned in the early days of the church in terms of building the temple. That led me to the LDS archives in Salt Lake City, where a number of the original documents are housed. Steve Sorensen, the current LDS Church archivist, was one of the staff who worked with visiting scholars at the archives, and we became friends. When it came time for me to apply for the position of RLDS archivist, I asked Steve if he would write a letter of recommendation for me, and I think his letter had quite a bit of weight in terms of my selection.

Hauglid: Robert Matthews has done a wealth of research on the Inspired Version manuscripts, which are now housed in your archives. When did you first become acquainted with the research Robert Matthews was doing on the Joseph Smith manuscripts and the marked Bible?
Romig: Long before the time I began working in the archives, Bob had become a fixture. During my tenure, Bob always had a kind of presence here in the Church History Department; whether physically present or not, he left an impression. Because of the interest of Dick Howard [RLDS historian emeritus] in the Restoration scriptures, and since I worked under Dick, it was pretty hard to avoid hearing about Bob’s research. In the 1960s, when Bob came to Independence to study the JST manuscripts, the History Department was located in the auditorium. The library-archives were on the fifth floor. After his initial visit in the late 1960s, Bob came about every two or three years on follow-up visits. He came back as often as possible. It’s pretty hard to be around Bob and not become enchanted by his caring, thoughtful personality and his natural curiosity about subjects in which we share a mutual interest.

Huntington: Aside from hearing about Robert Matthews from Dick Howard, when did you first actually meet Robert Matthews?
Romig: I’d say it was about 1991. It might have been 1990. BYU English professor Royal Skousen was also visiting about the same time working on his critical text project with the Book of Mormon manuscript. Preparation for Skousen’s activities distracted me a bit from my first opportunity to meet with Bob.
**Huntington:** Was Robert Matthews the first LDS scholar to show interest in the Joseph Smith manuscripts?

**Romig:** He was the first LDS scholar to actually work with the JST manuscripts. If you have talked with Bob, then you are aware that he made his first request to see the manuscripts in 1960. Bob was persistent, sort of like water dripping on a stone. He also made requests in 1965 and in 1966 and was denied access on each occasion. It took some time before he finally succeeded in viewing the manuscripts.

**Hauglid:** Do you think it was just a matter of time before Brother Matthews would have received permission to see the manuscripts, or were there other factors?

**Romig:** I think his persistence certainly was an important factor in ultimately gaining the desired access, but there has also been a long history associated with the manuscript and external scholarly access.

Bob’s request in 1966 included a handwritten note along the bottom. The note said, “Did you know that there were four leading sources just this year who have published accounts that the Inspired Version as published by your church is unreliable?” Now that proved very clever. Bob knew exactly what he was doing. That note was a big factor. After that his request seemed to be taken more seriously. But there were other reasons that contributed to denial of access. An important one was the condition of the manuscript. Charles Davies served as RLDS church historian just before Dick Howard. Dick worked with Charles Davies until Davies resigned in May 1965 due to failing health. Dick was appointed acting historian in June 1965 and named church historian in April 1966. During the early 1960s they had become concerned that the manuscript was increasingly at risk. Years of use were beginning to take their toll. Charles and Dick initiated a program to ensure the preservation of the content of the material. The manuscripts needed to be cataloged and filmed. Initially, they consulted with experts hoping to photograph the manuscripts. However, they found that certain pages just didn’t photograph well. They finally settled on microfilming with more successful results. Completion of the microfilming of the manuscripts in 1968, by Dick and his assistant Dan Muir, removed the final obstacle, and they were able to invite Bob to come and work with the manuscripts. I don’t think there was ever a feeling that they didn’t want to make the material available for research; it was that they wanted to make sure that it was done in a way that wouldn’t compromise the integrity of the material. Under Dick’s tenure, RLDS historical collections were opened, and by 1966 LDS
scholars were busy in the RLDS archives on a number of projects. Nevertheless, RLDS authorities were still anxious about allowing an LDS scholar to work with our scriptural materials. I think they understood what Bob wanted to do and believed the best about his intentions but were troubled by the possibility that his request may not be totally forthcoming.

**Huntington:** In our interview with Robert Matthews, he mentioned that he had written to President Wallace Smith requesting permission to see the manuscripts. After he had received permission from the Community of Christ to see the manuscripts, he also had the opportunity of meeting President Smith in your archives. In that meeting, President Smith asked Bob if he was officially representing the Mormon Church or his own personal interests. Bob replied that his interest in the manuscript was personal and not tied to the official interests of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Did you ever hear about that meeting between Bob and President Smith? What are your recollections or perceptions of that meeting?

**Romig:** Though a bit presumptuous, in this instance I think Bob was wise in corresponding directly with President Smith. After President W. Wallace Smith received Bob’s letter asking to see the manuscripts and marked Bible, he consulted with his counselors, with Dick’s supervisor, Apostle Clifford Cole, and with Dick to determine whether this was appropriate or not. Once permission was given and Bob actually came to start work, President Smith was curious for himself about what this fellow was up to. So he took time to come down to meet Bob personally.

**Hauglid:** We know that in this time period, 1968–74, Bob typed up the manuscript on a manual typewriter that the Community of Christ Archives provided him. Do you know anything else about Bob’s visits? How was he viewed by his counterparts, such as the historians, the archivists, and others doing research in the archives?

**Romig:** Well, we’ve talked about the initial anxiety, but Bob eventually became a fixture. He’s got a winning personality. He’s a gentleman and a scholar. Those attributes quickly won over our staff. I don’t think there was anybody who didn’t like Bob as a person and didn’t come to appreciate what he was doing as a scholar. I think Dick Howard got along well with Bob. Dick enjoyed their association, since they had very similar interests in terms of scriptural scholarship. I think everybody came to look forward to his visits. In terms of how Bob’s work has been regarded, his work was basically a landmark study. It has
provided an enormous baseline of information that has been helpful to our institution as well as the larger Restoration community. Bob’s research has stood the test of time. A lot of RLDS scholars have not only found Bob’s scholarship reliable but have also drawn from it. For example, when Geoffrey Spencer, a scholar and subsequent Apostle, was working on the curriculum for the Temple School in the 1980s, he drew heavily from Bob’s research with the manuscript. Bob’s perception of the evolution of the various manuscripts and of their relationships to one another was especially helpful. Dick Howard initially developed a different descriptive system for the manuscripts than Bob, but since I have been archivist, we have adopted Bob’s numbering system.

**Hauglid:** Why was Bob’s numbering system adopted?

**Romig:** His numbering is more correct! RLDS scholars misunderstood the order and sequence within some of the manuscript materials. What we had called Old Testament Manuscript 1, Bob identified as number 3 and vice versa. As that became better understood, we adopted Bob’s numbering sequence. That has proven quite helpful as movement-wide collaborative scholarship with the materials has ensued. Also, Dick Howard indicated that he was informed by Bob’s work when he revised his book on the Restoration scriptures in 1995. So I think Bob has been a very positive influence on RLDS scholarship.

**Huntington:** From your perspective, how did Robert Matthews’s work with the JST or Inspired Version manuscript impact the relationship between the Community of Christ and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

**Romig:** Well, Bob’s scholarship takes place in a larger context of improving relationships between the two churches. But Bob’s work certainly occurred at the very beginning of this process. RLDS interaction with Bob provided a sense that this is somebody who is a good, reliable scholar, someone we can depend on. We can step out of the room for a minute while he’s with the manuscript, and it will still be there when we come back. In this way, Bob helped break down RLDS stereotypes about LDS. I think this helped us look at the larger universe of our LDS colleagues in a new way, at least in the history arena. And, of course, since we liked Bob, we realized that it was probable that we also could get along with some of his colleagues in the LDS scholarly community. Just as Bob represented the LDS side, I like to give Dick Howard a lot of credit from this side for helping open up those doors, but he is not alone. As LDS and RLDS professors and
scholars became active in the Mormon History Association and the John Whitmer Historical Association, former barriers began to lower. As scholars associated in these professional groups, the positive experiences similar to those early contacts with Bob began to multiply. So I certainly think Bob’s ongoing good nature and professionalism went a long way in helping craft better relations.

**Huntington:** So really those thirteen visits over that 1968–74 period were important for the RLDS Church at the time?

**Romig:** Right. It is part of a larger pattern that continues to emerge. It was possible because there were good Christian, caring people on both sides.

**Hauglid:** In the early 1970s, the LDS Church organized the Scriptures Publication Committee to start looking at a new edition of the Bible for the Latter-day Saints, and at that point the committee decided that they would like to incorporate some of the Inspired Version in the LDS edition of the Bible. What can you tell us about that time period in terms of how that came about?

**Romig:** The publishing wing of the LDS Church contacted the publishing wing of our institution, Herald Publishing House, and asked if this was possible. Throughout the years, the RLDS Church has typically answered such requests that most if not all of the text is now in the public domain. Herald House consulted with the RLDS presidency. The presidency invited input from Dick Howard. Dick said, “It’s a good idea; let’s do this.” Also, I think, from the LDS perspective, the committee had already made the decision that they didn’t want to reproduce the whole Inspired Version. They preferred to just incorporate significant portions as annotations or footnotes into the forthcoming edition of the scriptures. Because the committee only asked for a limited use, it made it easier for Herald House to say yes.

**Huntington:** We’ve seen a copy of the agreement of the one dollar the RLDS Church requested from the LDS Church.

**Romig:** Again, I think that through the years, one of the RLDS Church’s priorities has been to encourage good scholarship. The Community of Christ continues to be more interested in trying to advance scholarship and make the heritage of the movement available rather than trying to control access. But again, such attitudes continue to grow as relationships improve within the church historical community of the movement. And also, the presidency of the Community of Christ
is now composed of individuals who have had firsthand experiences with these kinds of questions and who have a unique appreciation for the importance and value of making this kind of information as widely available as possible.

**Hauglid:** What are your personal feelings about Joseph Smith’s work with the translation of the Bible?

**Romig:** Well, I find Joseph’s revision of the Bible to be an important resource of the church in several ways. Because my primary interest is historical, I see it as an important resource that provides a wealth of information about how early church leaders engaged in big projects, how they collaborated, and how they generated economic support to pursue such projects. It reveals a lot about their thought processes and their level of sophistication in terms of dealing with large, important religious questions. So, from a historical perspective, as an artifact of their lives, it is an incredibly important resource. I don’t think we have really come to appreciate the importance of the Inspired Version materials. Joseph’s translation continues to have rich value for both scriptural and historical uses.
Two pages from the original Joseph Smith Translation (JST) manuscripts showing Joseph Smith’s changes to important New Testament passages. Top: JST, John 8:11 explains that the women taken in adultery and spared by Jesus “glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name.” In John 9:27, the blind man who was healed on the Sabbath said to his accusers, “I have told you already, and ye did not believe: wherefore, would you believe if I should tell you again? And would you be his disciples?” Bottom: The changes to Mark 14:10 explain that Judas “turned away from” Jesus “and was offended because of his words.”

Images courtesy of Community of Christ Library-Archives.
The more we are acquainted with the life and ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the more evident it becomes that Elder John Taylor did not overstate reality when he said that “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C 135:3). This passage goes on to specify that it was the abundance of revelation and scripture given Joseph Smith that particularly qualified him for such a lofty epithet.

Among the volumes of precious scripture that came to us through the Prophet is the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST). Of this work, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “It was [the Lord’s] design and purpose to bring forth the Book of Mormon as a new and added witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . After this—as a crowning achievement—he would begin the perfection of the Bible, a work destined to be greater and have more significance than any of us have yet realized.”¹ On another occasion, he added: “The Inspired Version is inspired. . . . The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is holy scripture. In one sense of the word, it is the crowning part of the doctrinal restoration.”² As a “crowning achievement” and “crowning part” of the Restoration, the JST is one of the great evidences of the divine calling of Joseph Smith and a major dimension of the work of God in the restoration of all things.³
The complete JST was published by the Reorganized Church in 1867. One hundred twelve years later, in 1979, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published major portions of the JST in the footnotes and an appendix to its edition of the Bible. Why is it important to study the JST? How many verses did the Spirit inspire the Prophet Joseph Smith to change? How many of those inspired revisions are now found in our current edition? Were they all included? If not, why not? These and other related questions are the focus of this article.

Why Study the JST?

The Prophet Joseph Smith was commanded by God to undertake the translation of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. Joseph Smith testified that the work of translating the Bible was one “which the Lord had appointed” him to do (see D&C 76:15), and he considered the revision an integral “branch of his calling.” The work of translation occupied much of the Prophet’s time from June 1830 to July 1833. During this time, the Prophet combed through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Prophet’s translation would, in part, restore lost meaning and material to the sacred record as well as correct erroneous parts of the King James text. Though more could have been done, the Lord was pleased with Joseph Smith’s translation and directed the Prophet and other Church leaders to “publish the new translation of my holy word unto the inhabitants of the earth” (D&C 124:89; see also D&C 104:58–59). However, Joseph Smith’s life was tragically cut short before the typesetting and printing of the entire revision could be accomplished.

Although all of the translation was not published during the Prophet’s lifetime, the JST is significant for several important reasons. The Savior declared that the JST contains the “fulness of my scriptures” (D&C 42:15; 104:58) and has been revealed for the “salvation of mine own elect” (D&C 35:20). Later, the Lord declared to Frederick G. Williams, then a member of the First Presidency, that Joseph Smith was called to “do a great work” and that the “work of translation [was] for the salvation of souls.”

Studying the JST is one of the most rewarding scripture-study experiences that can be had because it deals with an inspired rendition of the King James Bible. The Savior pronounced these inspired verses to be “even as they are in mine own bosom” (D&C 35:20). Thus, more than a historical artifact, the JST is divine scripture to be used. As Elder McConkie testified, the JST is “a thousand times over the best Bible now existing on earth.” He further noted that “the added...
truths [the Prophet Joseph] placed in the Bible and the corrections he made raise the resultant work to the same high status as the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.”

Thus, when we read the Bible through the lens of the JST, we have, as it were, the Holy Spirit and the Prophet Joseph Smith at our side to guide our study and comprehension.

But many have yet to discover, much less appreciate, this work that was commanded to be taught “unto all men . . . to the salvation of [God’s] own elect” (D&C 42:58; 35:20). More than a reference work, the JST was given “for the purpose of building up my church and kingdom on the earth, and to prepare my people for the time when I shall dwell with them, which is nigh at hand” (D&C 104:59).

The JST also stands as one of the great evidences of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s role in the Restoration and of his divinely inspired ministry. Robert J. Matthews expressed the hope that the future also may bring forth evidences to corroborate the changes made in the JST: “But what of the future? This is a day of great discovery and expansion of knowledge of ancient things. The JST makes some very specific statements about Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, John the Baptist, and Jesus that are not known to be written in any other document. It may well be that these things in the future will testify in a different way to the divine calling of Joseph Smith. Archaeological discoveries that confirm some of the unique historical aspects of the JST could introduce a new role for the book. It may be that apocryphal and archaeological sources will yet corroborate the details of the JST and therefore help testify of the Restoration to an unbelieving world.”

Although “the Inspired Version does not supplant the King James Version as the official church version of the Bible, . . . the explanations and changes made by the Prophet Joseph Smith provide enlightenment and useful commentary on many biblical passages.”

Precious Truths Restored

Latter-day Saints hold the Bible in high esteem and believe it to be the recorded word of God, covering centuries of human history. We accept the Bible as divinely revealed scripture and testify of its divine nature (see D&C 20:11), but we recognize that there are translation and transmission problems found in various versions of the Bible, including the King James Version. The ancient prophet Nephi foresaw that many plain and precious truths and also many covenants would be both “taken away” and “kept back” from the Bible during its transmission from the original writers and its translation to the modern world
(see 1 Nephi 13:26–29, 32, 34). The JST restores many of these precious things that were taken away, corrects many parts that had been corrupted, and adds a flood of new material and insight for which we can all be deeply grateful.

Perhaps as you have studied the Bible you have also been struck with the realization that many things do not square with Restoration truths or simply with the witness of the Holy Ghost within you. You are not alone. There are times when the biblical record just does not feel right, especially where it portrays our Heavenly Father as a capricious God acting out of self-interest or anger and seemingly lacking a consistently divine plan to deal with and save the children of His creation. Often, the prophets seem to be without a real knowledge of the plan of salvation and Jesus Christ, around which the plan revolves. Such a portrayal is baffling at best and downright disheartening at worst, for the prophet Jacob plainly declared that “none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken [of] this Christ” (Jacob 7:11).

Our appreciation for the inspired JST heightens as we study the Bible and discover for ourselves that because “plain and precious things were taken away . . . out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them” (1 Nephi 13:29). Essential truth can be lost both physically (deletion or alteration of text) and through revisions by those of uninspired understanding to the great detriment of honest seekers of truth. Jesus, for example, condemned certain lawyers (experts in Old Testament law) saying, “Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge, the fulness of the scriptures” (JST, Luke 11:52; emphasis added). Whether they took away understanding through altering or deleting text or through wrongly interpreting it, the result was the same—a hindering of those who earnestly sought the kingdom of God. The JST often restores lost text as well as adds inspired context with which we can correctly understand the scriptures. It is one of the books Nephi was shown that our Heavenly Father would bring forward to “make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away” and to “make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved” (1 Nephi 13:39–40).

When the boy Joseph Smith was searching for truth, he was frustrated that “the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible” (Joseph
Smith—History 1:12). The JST changes often restore lost confidence from interpretations of questionable texts and restore “parts which are plain and most precious; and also [the] many covenants of the Lord” that were missing (1 Nephi 13:26).

The JST was not incidental to the Restoration; it was central to it. The revelations from heaven, given to Joseph Smith while he was working on the JST, were the primary fountain from which the great doctrinal restoration flowed to the Saints in these latter days. More than half—77 of the 138 revelations canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants and two of the five books in the Pearl of Great Price—came directly from Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible or were revealed during the time he was working on the JST.

**How many verses in the Bible was the Prophet Joseph Smith inspired to change?**

After examining the JST manuscript, Robert J. Matthews discovered that with the verses added as an introduction to the book of Genesis (now Moses chapter 1 in the Pearl of Great Price) plus 1,289 other verses changed in the Old Testament and 2,096 verses changed in the New Testament, the JST offers insights and clarification in 3,410 verses. Many of these changes deal with the very passages that make the Bible confusing to read. Thus, when we read the JST, we receive inspired prophetic commentary to assist us with over three thousand verses, many of which are challenging, confusing, or misleading as they now stand.

**How many of the JST changes are noted in the Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures?**

The question is sometimes asked, do Latter-day Saints have all the JST changes noted in their scriptures? Of the 3,410 verses changed in the JST, the LDS edition contains notes to about one-third of them.

For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, one of the greatest recorded sermons of the Savior in all holy writ, there are 111 verses in the King James Version. The JST changes noted in the LDS edition involve sixteen of those verses. But in the Joseph Smith Translation, the Prophet actually made changes to eighty-three of those verses. Because there are some JST footnotes in the scriptures, many people may naturally assume that all the JST changes are contained in the LDS edition, not realizing that there are many other passages the Prophet Joseph was inspired to change that are also worth studying.

Precious Truths Restored
It is important to note that there are significant reasons why we do not have all the JST changes included in our edition of the scriptures, and we will describe these in greater detail below. But first, let us look at what we do have. Gratefully, we do have most of the significant changes; in fact, almost all of the doctrinally significant changes in the JST can be found in our edition.

The Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures contains approximately eight hundred JST changes to verses noted in the footnotes and the JST appendix (the seventeen-page JST appendix found at the end of the New Testament). When those verses are added to the 356 verses found in the book of Moses (the JST of Genesis 1:1 to 6:13) and the 55 verses found in Joseph Smith—Matthew (JST Matthew 24), the total is approximately twelve hundred verses. Thus, as previously mentioned, we actually have about one-third (1,200 of 3,410) of the verses Joseph was inspired to change noted in our edition of the scriptures.

**Why were all the JST changes not included in our edition of the scriptures?**

Since the inclusion of inspired JST text in footnotes and a lengthy appendix in the 1979 edition of the King James Version, many have come to treasure the expansive revelation contained therein. But not all of the inspired changes were included in our edition of the scriptures, and there are several important reasons.

**Historical reasons.** After the Prophet’s death, his wife, Emma, retained the manuscript pages and the Bible Joseph had marked while doing the translation. Emma did not feel disposed to give them up, “notwithstanding the fact that numerous requests for it were made from time to time. . . . She felt the grave responsibility of safely keeping it until such time as the Lord would permit or direct its publication.”

Many years later, writing to her son Joseph Smith III, to whom she had given the manuscript, Emma commented, “Now as it regards the [manuscripts] of the new translation if you wish to keep them you may do so, but if not I would like to have them. I have often thought the reason why our house did not burn down when it has been so often on fire was because of them, and I still feel there is a sacredness attached to them.”

Willard Richards, Joseph Smith’s clerk, called on Emma, requesting the manuscript, but she declined to give it up. Years later, President John Taylor appointed Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith to call on Joseph Smith III at Plano, Illinois, in hopes of reviewing the original manuscript. Joseph Smith III was visiting in Iowa at the time,
and they were not permitted to see it. From the time of Joseph Smith’s death in 1844 until the 1960s, the only Latter-day Saint who was allowed to see, study, and copy portions of the JST manuscript was John Bernhisel, personal physician and friend of the Prophet’s family. With Emma’s permission, Bernhisel kept the manuscripts for a period of three months, during which time he copied the first eight chapters of Genesis, one verse from Matthew 23, and all of Matthew 24. He commented, “I did not copy all that was translated leaving some few additions and changes that were made in some of the books. But so far as I did copy, I did so as correctly as I could.”

Had he known his copy would be the only copy of the JST manuscript Latter-day Saints in Utah would have for over a hundred years, he probably would have exercised greater diligence to copy more.

One reason, therefore, that the LDS Church did not print the entire JST is that the Church did not possess the JST manuscript. The RLDS Church (now known as the Community of Christ), which first published the JST in 1867, owned the JST manuscripts and the copyright. When the LDS edition was being prepared for publication in the 1970s, we sought for and received permission from the RLDS Church to use portions of the JST in our scriptures. Though RLDS and LDS relations had been improving, there was concern that had we asked for permission to use all of the JST changes, we may not have gotten any of them. We are fortunate and blessed to have that portion of the JST we do have.

**Space limitations.** Even if we would have been permitted to use all JST changes, there may not have been enough room to include them. When the LDS edition was being prepared, it contained all of the text of the King James Version of the Bible, plus over three hundred pages of Topical Guide references (which include, by the way, the largest selection of references about Jesus Christ ever published in any Bible), a 234-page LDS Bible Dictionary, new maps and gazetteer, and the seventeen-page JST appendix. The entire volume totals nearly twenty-five hundred pages. There was simply not enough room to include every JST change. The binding on the LDS edition of the Bible could not hold more pages without bursting at the seams.

In fact, to make it possible to include as many footnotes as we did, President Thomas S. Monson, a printer by trade, was instrumental in creating a new font for the LDS edition with shortened stems (on letters like d, h, p, and q) so that more lines of text would fit at the bottom of each page (see the footnotes on any page of the LDS edition). The work done in Cambridge, England, on printing our Bible
and its unique footnoting system earned the Church the top graphics arts award in 1980 for typesetting excellence in Bible printing.21

Instructions from the First Presidency. The First Presidency gave instructions to the Scriptures Publications Committee that if the essential doctrines contained in JST changes were already found in the scriptures, they did not necessarily need to be duplicated. That is why the very first JST change does not appear until the footnote to Genesis 6:18. One would assume that with Genesis chapters 1–6 covering the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, there would be many changes in the JST. And there are! But none are noted in our Bible because the book of Moses (chapters 1–8) in the Pearl of Great Price is the inspired version of Genesis 1:1 through 6:13. Because we already had all of those changes elsewhere in our scriptures, there was no need to repeat them in the Bible. Similarly, since the Book of Mormon “sermon on the mount” contains the essential changes also present in the JST Bible versions, it was not necessary to repeat them all in the LDS edition of the KJV. The same is true for the inspired translation of Matthew 24. Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price is the JST of Matthew 24, so there are no JST footnotes found in Matthew 24.

Was the JST ever finished?

One of the most common assumptions about why we may be hesitant to use the JST is linked to the question of whether Joseph Smith ever completed his translation. From June 1830 until July 1833, the Prophet went through the entire Bible from cover to cover, from Genesis to Revelation. On July 2, 1833, Joseph Smith’s journal entry reads: “We are exceedingly fatigued, owing to a great press of business. We this day finished the translating of the Scriptures, for which we returned gratitude to our Heavenly Father.”22

Thus, it took the Prophet Joseph three years to accomplish the task of going through the Bible. But he did indicate that he had completed the task by 1833. Then, he spent the next eleven years trying to prepare the manuscript and raise the funds to print the JST. During that time, he also occasionally revisited portions of the JST manuscript and made a number of additional revisions, most of which are in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon.

In one sense, the Prophet completed his task of translating the Bible. He moved from Genesis to Revelation, going through the entire Bible cover to cover. Joseph did not, however, make every change in the King James Version that could have been made. His sermons from 1833 to 1844 are filled with numerous interpretations about Bible
verses not found in the JST. He made only a few additional changes in the JST after 1833. *What he did not finish was getting the JST manuscript typeset and to the press.* His wife, Emma, mentioned that Joseph wanted to go through the manuscript one more time and then have it printed.\(^{23}\) Unfortunately, his life ended before he could do this. However, the Lord was apparently satisfied with the JST because He commanded the Saints to “print my words, the fulness of my scriptures” (D&C 104:58; see also 124:89).

Although the Prophet could have done more, he was divinely directed to publish the translation as it stood, thereby making the JST available to the Latter-day Saints and the world (see D&C 42:56–58). In fact, Joseph Smith had planned to print the Book of Mormon and the JST of the New Testament under the same cover,\(^ {24}\) ostensibly so that the world could have the two best testaments of Jesus Christ bound in one volume.

Although the JST was never published in its entirety during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, portions of it were printed in several different publications (like the *Times and Seasons*); but the First Presidency’s pleadings to the Saints for the needed assistance to print the JST in full were not heeded, and the Prophet was murdered before the JST could be readied for the press.\(^ {25}\)

Elder McConkie offered this explanation to the question of whether the JST was ever finished:

In some minds there seems to be a nagging uncertainty about the so-called Inspired Version. After all, some say, the Prophet did not finish his work, and how can we be sure what he did finish is correct?

May I be pardoned if I say that negative attitudes and feelings about the Joseph Smith Translation are simply part of the devil’s program to keep the word of truth from the children of men. True, the Joseph Smith Translation, though completed to the point that the early Brethren were going to publish it at one time, has not been completed in the full and true sense. But for that matter neither has the Book of Mormon. I am as anxious to read and study what is in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon as I am to give the same attention to those parts of the Bible yet to be revealed.\(^ {26}\)

**How does the Church view the JST?**

Regarding official Church endorsement of the JST, Elder Dallin H. Oaks observed: “The Church’s most authoritative pronouncement on the standing of the Joseph Smith Translation is contained in actions, not words. After prolonged and prayerful deliberation, the
First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve included over six hundred quotations from the Joseph Smith Translation in the Church’s monumental new edition of the King James Bible published in 1979 and in every printing since that time. . . . In addition . . . scores of JST excerpts too lengthy for inclusion in footnotes are included in their entire text following the Bible Dictionary [in the JST appendix].” This official Church endorsement was mirrored by Elder McConkie when he addressed the worldwide Church Educational System with this forceful exhortation: “Of course we should use the Joseph Smith Translation in our study and teaching.” The declaration in D&C 42:12–16 includes the “command to teach the changes and additions now found in the so-called Inspired Version. . . . This, then, is what is expected of us as teachers.”

As Elder Oaks has further reminded us, “There should be no doubt about the current status of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. It is a member of the royal family of scripture. [And] as a member of the royal family of scripture it should be noticed and honored on any occasion when it is present.” When we consistently “notice and honor” the Prophet’s inspired revisions, we move with satisfaction in the direction of President Boyd K. Packer’s expression of hope on behalf of Church members: “With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will. The older generation has been raised without them, but there is another generation growing up. The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and of Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him.”

Conclusion

Like climbing to the top of a mountain, studying JST changes takes effort, but it also takes us to new heights of understanding about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and gives us improved views of the Savior’s life, ministry, and teachings. The insights it yields offer readers a unique doctrinal experience that cannot be had from reading any other source. Elder McConkie testified: “The Joseph Smith Translation, or Inspired Version, is a thousand times over the best Bible now existing on earth. It contains all that the King James Version does, plus pages of additions and corrections and an occasional deletion. It was made by the spirit of revelation, and the changes and additions are
the equivalent of the revealed word in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. . . . It is one of the great evidences of [Joseph Smith’s] prophetic call.”

Finally, we close with the following invitation from Robert J. Matthews: “As teachers and students in the Church Educational System, we are not merely ‘invited’ to become acquainted with the JST, but I think we are expected to do so. . . . If you do not already have a testimony, by the Spirit, of the worth of the JST, then there is waiting for you one of the fruitful experiences in your career. . . . I have tasted of its spirit, and I know it is a great aid in teaching the gospel and in serving as a tangible witness for the divine ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith and for the mission of Jesus Christ.”

The following chart contains a selection of JST changes that were made by the Prophet Joseph Smith but that, for the reasons explained above, were not included in the LDS edition of the King James Version.

### Additional JST Changes Not Found in the Latter-day Saint Edition of the King James Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KJV</th>
<th>JST (changes in italics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 11:9</td>
<td>Genesis 11:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therefore is the name of it called Babel;</td>
<td>. . . therefore, is the name of it called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because the Lord did there confound</td>
<td>Babel, because the Lord was displeased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the language of all the earth . . .</td>
<td>with their works, and did there confound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the language of all the earth . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 16:10</td>
<td>Genesis 16:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the angel of the Lord said unto her,</td>
<td>And the angel of the Lord said unto her,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will multiply thy seed exceedingly . .</td>
<td>The Lord will multiply thy seed exceedingly . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 18:20</td>
<td>Genesis 18:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the Lord said . . .</td>
<td>And the angel of the Lord said unto Abraham . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 18:33</td>
<td>Genesis 18:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the Lord went his way, as soon as he</td>
<td>And as soon as he had left communing with the Lord,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had left communing with Abraham. . .</td>
<td>Abraham went his way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Sarah said, God hath made me to</td>
<td>And Sarah said, God has made me to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laugh, so that all that hear will laugh</td>
<td>rejoice; and also all that know me will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with me.</td>
<td>rejoice with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 22:1</td>
<td>Genesis 22:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . God did tempt Abraham . .</td>
<td>. . . God did try Abraham . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>JST (changes in italics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 22:12</td>
<td>Genesis 22:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . thine only son from me.</td>
<td>. . . thine only <em>Isaac</em> from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 48:10</td>
<td>Genesis 48:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . Israel . . . could not see.</td>
<td>. . . Israel . . . could not see <em>well</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 12:33</td>
<td>Exodus 12:33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . for they said, We be all dead men.</td>
<td>. . . for they said, We <em>have found our first-born</em> all dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 32:35</td>
<td>Exodus 32:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . they made the calf, which Aaron made.</td>
<td>. . . they <em>worshipped</em> the calf, which Aaron made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 22:9</td>
<td>Leviticus 22:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . if they profane it: I the Lord do sanctify them.</td>
<td>. . . if they profane <em>not mine ordinances</em>, I the Lord <em>will</em> sanctify them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy 2:30</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit . . .</td>
<td>. . . for he hardened his spirit . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel 15:35</td>
<td>1 Samuel 15:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.</td>
<td>. . . the Lord <em>rent the kingdom from Saul whom</em> he had made king over Israel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel 19:9</td>
<td>1 Samuel 19:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the evil spirit from the Lord . . .</td>
<td>And the evil spirit <em>which was not of the Lord</em> . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel 24:16</td>
<td>2 Samuel 24:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . the Lord repented . . .</td>
<td>. . . the <em>people</em> repented . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 3:14</td>
<td>1 Kings 3:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.</td>
<td>And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my statutes, and my commandments, then I will lengthen thy days, <em>and thou shalt not walk in unrighteousness, as did thy father David</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 14:8</td>
<td>1 Kings 14:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments . . .</td>
<td>And rent the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it thee, <em>because he kept not my commandments</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 15:5</td>
<td>1 Kings 15:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.</td>
<td>. . . save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, <em>wherein the Lord cursed him</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>JST (changes in italics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chronicles 18:20</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 18:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then there came out a spirit . . .</td>
<td>Then there came out a <em>lying</em> spirit . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 22:12</td>
<td>Psalm 22:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan . . .</td>
<td>Many <em>armies</em> have compassed me; strong <em>armies</em> of Bashan . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 36:1</td>
<td>Psalm 36:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.</td>
<td>The <em>wicked</em>, <em>who live in</em> transgression, <em>saith in their hearts</em>, <em>There is no condemnation; for there is no</em> fear of God before <em>their eyes</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 82:2</td>
<td>Psalm 82:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will ye judge unjustly . . .</td>
<td>How long will ye <em>suffer them to judge</em> unjustly . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 6:9</td>
<td>Isaiah 6:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.</td>
<td>. . . Hear ye indeed, but <em>they understood</em> not; and see ye indeed, but <em>they perceived</em> not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 13:15</td>
<td>Isaiah 13:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every one that is found shall be thrust through;</td>
<td>Every one that is <em>proud</em> shall be thrust through;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 14:19</td>
<td>Isaiah 14:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . and as the raiment of those that are slain . . .</td>
<td>. . . and the <em>remnant</em> of those that are slain . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 29:10</td>
<td>Isaiah 29:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Lord . . . hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.</td>
<td><em>For, behold ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected</em> the prophets, and your rulers; <em>and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquities</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah 51:20</td>
<td>Isaiah 51:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy sons have fainted . . .</td>
<td>Thy sons have fainted <em>save these two</em> . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah 18:8</td>
<td>Jeremiah 18:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . I will repent of the evil . . .</td>
<td>. . . I will <em>withhold</em> the evil . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah 18:10</td>
<td>Jeremiah 18:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . I will repent of the good . . .</td>
<td>. . . I will <em>withhold</em> the good . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 5:6</td>
<td>Matthew 5:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . for they shall be filled.</td>
<td>. . . for they shall be filled <em>with the Holy Ghost</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 5:13</td>
<td>Matthew 5:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ye are the salt of the earth . . .</td>
<td><em>i give unto you to be</em> the salt of the earth . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KJV</strong></td>
<td><strong>JST (changes in italics)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Matthew 5:14  
Ye are the light of the world . . . | Matthew 5:16  
... I give unto you to be the light of the world . . . |
| Matthew 8:10  
When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed . . . | Matthew 8:9  
And when they that followed him, heard this, they marvelled . . . |
| Matthew 10:16  
... be ye therefore wise as serpents . . . | Matthew 10:14  
... be ye therefore wise servants . . . |
| Matthew 13:5-6  
... and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched . . . | Matthew 13:5  
... and forthwith they sprung up; and when the sun was up, they were scorched, because they had no deepness of earth . . . |
| Matthew 13:44  
... the which when a man hath found, he hideth . . . | Matthew 13:46  
And when a man hath found a treasure which is hid, he secureth it . . . |
| Matthew 15:9  
... teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. | Matthew 15:8  
... teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men. |
| Matthew 18:19  
... as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them . . . | Matthew 18:19  
... as touching any thing that they shall ask, that they may not ask amiss, it shall be done for them . . . |
| Matthew 25:12  
... Verily I say unto you, I know you not. | Matthew 25:11  
... Verily I say unto you, Ye know me not. |
| Matthew 25:29  
For unto every one that hath shall be given, . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. | Matthew 25:29-30  
For unto every one who hath obtained other talents, shall be given. . . . But from him that hath not obtained other talents, shall be taken away even that which he hath received. |
| Mark 1:5  
... and were all baptized of him . . . | Mark 1:4  
... and many were baptized of him . . . |
| Mark 2:18  
And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him . . . | Mark 2:16  
And they came and said unto him, The disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast . . . |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KJV</th>
<th>JST (changes in italics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mark 7:4  
. . . except they wash, they eat not. | Mark 7:4  
. . . except they wash *their bodies*, they eat not. |
| Mark 8:12  
. . . There shall no sign be given unto this generation. | Mark 8:12  
. . . There shall no sign be given unto this generation, save the *sign of the prophet Jonah*; . . . |
| Mark 8:29  
. . . And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. | Mark 8:31  
And Peter answered and said unto him, Thou art the Christ, *the Son of the living God*. |
| Mark 15:36  
And one ran and filled a spunge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone . . . | Mark 15:41  
And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave him to drink; *others spake*, saying, Let him alone . . . |
| Luke 1:28  
And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. | Luke 1:28  
And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou *virgin*, who art highly favored of the Lord. The Lord is with thee, *for thou art chosen and blessed among women*. |
| Luke 8:18  
. . . for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not . . . | Luke 8:18  
. . . for whosoever receiveth, to him shall be given; and whosoever receiveth not . . . |
| Luke 10:32  
. . . passed by on the other side. | Luke 10:33  
. . . passed by on the other side *of the way*; for they desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him. |
| Luke 13:17  
. . . all the people rejoiced . . . | Luke 13:17  
. . . all his *disciples* rejoiced . . . |
| Luke 17:10  
. . . we have done that which was our duty to do. | Luke 17:10  
. . .*We have done that which was no more than our duty* to do. |
| Luke 21:17  
And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. | Luke 21:16  
And ye shall be hated of all *the world* for my name's sake. |
| Luke 22:31  
. . . that he may sift you as wheat . . . | Luke 22:31  
. . . that he may sift *the children of the kingdom* as wheat. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KJV</th>
<th>JST (changes in italics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John 3:32</td>
<td>John 3:32 . . . and <strong>but few men</strong> receive his testimony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 5:31</td>
<td>John 5:32 Therefore if I bear witness of myself, yet my witness is true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 6:27</td>
<td>John 6:27 . . . which the Son of <strong>Man</strong> hath power to give unto you . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 8:11</td>
<td>John 8:11 . . . Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. And the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 9:27</td>
<td>John 9:27 . . . ye did not believe: wherefore would you believe if I should tell you again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 13:2</td>
<td>Romans 13:2 . . . shall receive to themselves <strong>punishment</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 14:23</td>
<td>Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is <strong>condemned</strong> . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 12:31</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 12:31 . . . for I have shown unto you a more excellent way, therefore covet earnestly the best gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 5:18</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 5:18 And receiveth all the things of God . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 11:24</td>
<td>Hebrews 11:24 . . . when he was come to years <strong>of discretion</strong> . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 12:12</td>
<td>Hebrews 12:12 . . . lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

5. The Prophet Joseph Smith’s several efforts to publish the translation are reviewed by Robert J. Matthews in A Bible, A Bible! (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 133–43.
6. Revelation to Frederick G. Williams, January 5, 1834, Joseph Smith Collection, Letters 1834, Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
11. See Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 390.
12. The whole of chapter 13 gives the most authoritative commentary on the deterioration of original Bible text as well as the consequences and promise of restoration. For a more extensive examination of this issue, see Robert J. Matthews, “The Role of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible in the Restoration of Doctrine,” in The Disciple as Witness, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 327–41.
15. Emma Smith Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, correspondence, December 2, 1867, Emma Smith Papers, P4, f39, Community of Christ Archives.
17. For a more complete review of the circumstances and negative ramifications that accrued from this unfortunate miscommunication, see Reed Durham, “A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1965), 251–54.
20. A detailed discussion on this matter can be found in Robert J. Matthews, “I Have a Question,” Ensign, June 1992, 29.


23. For other reasons why the Prophet may not have made all possible revisions, see Robert L. Millet, “Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A Historical Overview,” in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, 33–35.


25. To read more about the Prophet Joseph Smith’s efforts to publish the JST, see Robert J. Matthews, *A Bible! A Bible!* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 133–43.


29. Dallin H. Oaks, “Scripture Reading, Revelation, and the JST,” in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, 13. Also, see page 161 where Elder Neal A. Maxwell is cited in response to a question about frequency of JST citations in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. There he states his view that the First Presidency and Twelve “would be disappointed if you did not use the JST extensively.”


33. For more on this subject, see Matthews, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, June 1992, 29.
Sister Griffith has written a portion of their story, detailing some of the trials and some of the successes. The hope in publishing this article is that the Griffiths’ experience and example might act as a motivation, comfort, and source of excitement to those considering a similar course.

My husband and I had always known we would go on a mission when my mother passed away. We did not know she would live to be ninety-six, but when she died suddenly, in excellent health, we knew it was time for us to go. The day after her death, even before her funeral, we submitted our papers. Then we waited and waited. We had said we would go anywhere, for any length of time, on any kind of mission.

Four months later, we received our call to serve a twenty-three-month CES mission in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and three weeks later we were on our way to the Missionary Training Center for six days. (When I asked my husband, Eddy, to help me remember how many days we were there, he answered, “Forty-eight years.”)

We packed our SUV (the truck that would later become the mission “limo”) with everything we thought we would need for the next two years and started on a four-day, cross-country drive that would give us plenty of time to wonder what awaited us in Pennsylvania. We couldn’t believe our eyes when we rounded a curve at twilight and suddenly saw the incredible Pittsburgh skyline. It was the beginning of a love affair with the city of Pittsburgh and its friendly people, especially the young adults and missionaries whom we would make our focus for the fastest twenty-three months of our lives.
Getting Situated

After we scoured the want ads and called about every apartment that looked like it might fulfill our needs, my husband drove us to look at ten apartments. Because neither of us had ever been to Pittsburgh before, this in itself was quite a feat. The only available apartments were the ones that the students at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University had rejected.

Our wants, we thought, were small: we wanted a place with a garage our 6-foot-8-inch-tall seven-passenger truck would fit in, and we wanted to be within walking distance of the church. As recent transfers from southern California, we were trying to protect ourselves from the cold winters we feared. (The winters turned out to be mild; it was the humidity in July that we weren’t prepared for.)

We moved into the tenth apartment we looked at. It was void of furniture except for our air bed, which we had carried with us on top of the truck. Our next stop was IKEA to buy furniture, although IKEA’s advertisement, “some furniture may need assembling,” turned out to be quite an understatement. Every piece of furniture we bought for our new home needed assembling, the most difficult being two desks, which were an absolute must for us. Eddy became an expert “furniture maker,” and it was fun having all our furniture coordinated for the first time in our forty-year marriage. While he assembled, I unpacked the twenty-six boxes we had brought with us—mostly books and notebooks from my nine years of teaching Cambodian and early-morning seminary.

Getting to Work

The Oakland chapel was only seven blocks away from our Shady-side apartment, but where was the institute? To our amazement, the money had been allotted, the plans had been drawn, and the contract had been let twelve months before, but there was no construction...
and no institute. The construction holdup was over where to put the $9,000 folding partition that would divide the large multipurpose room into two teaching areas. Now I knew why we had been called to Pittsburgh. My husband had been a general contractor in Albuquerque thirty-three years before we moved to California, where we were converted to the church. His solution was to leave the divider out entirely, and this turned out to be inspired. Two months later we had our 120-by-180-foot institute room, complete with a kitchen, two offices, two bathrooms, and tables and chairs for eighty people.

We had been teaching Sunday School in both the singles ward and the Pittsburgh family ward while we waited for the institute building to be finished. I taught family history, and Eddy taught mission preparation. We taught temple marriage and family relations together, alternating with Mary Eror, the best teacher of this subject I have ever heard. It was a challenge to try to keep up with her.

With the institute building finished, we were ready to really teach, or so we thought. Our CES coordinator, Chad Bailey, had said we could teach whatever we wanted, whenever we wanted. I chose “Isaiah—The Latter Days.” Because there was no manual for this, I was asked to submit to Church Education in Salt Lake City a list of all the books I wanted to use to write my own lessons. I was given permission to use all but one of the thirteen books I requested. These books provided more than enough background for getting into the scriptures and into my favorite subject.

I spent twenty hours organizing my first lesson. What a spiritual treat this was! I don’t know which I enjoyed more—preparing my lessons or giving them. I learned so much from both. I had never taught young adults before, except sisters in Relief Society and members of my ward Gospel Doctrine class, but those were different. I was scared to death; I knew the Lord had always been with me before; and I knew that teaching was certainly something I enjoyed doing. I had been an elementary school teacher for six years, three of them as a substitute, and I knew that the older the kids were, the bigger the challenge but also the greater the fun.

My first Isaiah class brought four students out on a cold Tuesday night. This number eased my fear, but it was quickly replaced by self-doubt. No one wanted to hear me teach about Isaiah. I thought everyone wanted to hear about the last days!

We had learned at the Senior MTC that when we teach the scriptures, we should teach the principles and then teach the students how to apply the principles in their lives. This worked out fantastically.
Helping Individuals

We learned that at that point in our lives, we were there to help the Savior complete His mission to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of men and women. He had brought about the immortality of God’s children through His Atonement, but it was our job to teach and bring this understanding to as many young people as possible so they might desire to live their lives in a way that would lead them to life eternal. We felt points of success as we watched lives around us transforming.

One such transformation occurred in the life of a young man who was graduating from high school but didn’t know what to do following graduation. His girlfriend brought him to institute. He was baptized and is now serving a mission at age twenty-three, and she is happily waiting for him to return.

Another young convert didn’t know if she should marry or go on a mission that she had been eagerly planning since her baptism a year before. She talked of nothing else. At institute, she learned that if she would pray for wisdom, God would bless her with knowledge. She was married in the Washington (DC) Temple to the returned missionary she had corresponded with while he was on his mission but had not met until he got home.

One man we all learned to love had fallen from a sixth-floor scaffold and had been told in the hospital that he would never walk again. The elders, sent by his sister, had given him a blessing, and he had been healed immediately. Many years later, our sister missionaries were inspired to talk to him at a bus stop. He knew at once that the Lord had sent them to him. He took the missionary discussions and came to institute for every class. We never saw anyone so hungry for the gospel. He has been baptized and is a now a very strong member. His teenage son, who had been going down a very dangerous path, has also joined the Church.

One brilliant young man was actively fighting against the Church and its principles. He came to institute and the Missionary Preparation class, where he met his future wife. He soon became a dedicated member of the Church and did a great job with our e-mail list, one of the most demanding callings in the singles ward. He and his wife were married in the Columbus Ohio Temple, and they both still faithfully attend institute classes.

The experiences we had could never be bought with money. They helped us understand why we are on this earth and the joy that is found in helping bring the promise of eternal life to others.
Finding Our Purpose

Eddy and I determined that we needed to get more university students coming to institute. Maybe students working on master’s and doctoral degrees would be more in tune with Isaiah. Most of the Oakland Singles Ward was composed of young adults who had grown up in Pittsburgh and were working locally. However, our building was nestled in the midst of nine universities and colleges. Besides the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, we had Duquesne University, Carlow College, two chef schools, Chatham College, Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh Art Institute, and Community College of Allegheny County.

How could we reach these students? We decided that we first had to reach the twenty-three bishops and branch presidents who made up the two Pittsburgh stakes. We invited them, their wives, and the members of the stake presidencies and their wives to see the new institute and enjoy a New Mexico barbeque—without having to bring a thing. The wives enjoyed this, and the husbands enjoyed meeting one another. Many had never met before. This surprised us, but most of the chapels housed only one ward, and there was very little social contact among wards, let alone between the two stakes.

I had lots of experience planning and cooking for groups as the wife of a bishop and stake president and also as a counselor in the stake Relief Society and a Relief Society president, but I had never cooked for sixty-four people all by myself. Our seminary teacher and institute secretary, Valerie Jeffreys, insisted on bringing dessert: she wouldn’t take no for an answer. But I could not let anyone else contribute; it
had to be that way, because we had a favor to ask in return.

We wanted to get all these people excited about institute, and we needed their cooperation in getting the names of the young adults in their wards and branches. This plan worked beautifully. My husband called the eight hundred phone numbers we received, asking only for e-mail addresses. He didn’t put anyone on the spot. He discovered that young adults move from apartment to apartment as often as the weather changes and that they change their phone numbers as often as they change roommates, but they rarely change their e-mail addresses. We found that getting less-active members to look at an LDS Web site was impossible, but they checked their e-mail almost every day. This was something they wanted to do. After Eddy established an institute and singles ward e-mail list, an e-mail specialist was called from the ward. This person sent out weekly invitations to our classes and social events and made changes to our always-expanding list. We kept the list updated by having everyone who attended a function at the institute sign the roll with his or her name and e-mail address.

Full-time institute employees keep the same school-year schedule as their students, but since we had students from nine schools plus locals home for the summer, we were given permission by Barry Norton, our new institute coordinator, to teach institute year-round. This worked out well. This meant we had institute classes all summer, at Christmastime, and during all the different spring breaks. Fifty-two weeks a year, the Pittsburgh Institute of Religion was open.

We also tried teaching on Saturday nights and at other locations, but the students preferred driving two and a half hours from West Virginia, New York, or Ohio to missing out on meeting a new prospect or an old friend at our combined Friday night institute and social.

Working with Other Missionaries

A totally different aspect of our calling was working with the elders and sister missionaries and with President Scott Cameron and Sister Chris Cameron. Our Pittsburgh mission president and his wife were very gracious to us. They invited us to all the mission conferences for their 160 missionaries. They even allowed us, with the assistants, to plan and put on two of the conferences. Eddy was asked to bear his testimony at every conference. Being there allowed us to see again the missionaries who had transferred from our zone. This was such a blessing because we missed them so much.

A spiritual highlight of our association with these elders and sisters was our Tacos and Testimonies meetings at our apartment. A night
or so before transfer announcements, we invited the missionaries who were going home and their companions to our apartment for all-you-can-eat tacos, followed by practice for their upcoming meetings with their stake presidents and high council. This was an experience they were all dreading. Eddy explained to them what they would be expected to do and what questions they would probably be asked. Then they practiced. They included spiritual experiences most of us had never heard about and their testimonies like we had never before heard them given. Many tears were shed. Many feelings were experienced that had not been felt quite like that before.

A special time for me was our Christmas mission conferences, when we got to be with all the missionaries at a tearful time in their missions. I was asked to put on the Christmas program the first year and was told to try to make it upbeat without losing sight of its real meaning. My first thought was *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, by Barbara Robinson. My second thought was how funny it was, but I still felt strongly about it, so I approached Sister Cameron with the idea. Her immediate response was, “That’s my husband’s favorite Christmas story; we read it every year!” So with her enthusiastic approval, I put on my director-actor’s hat, but especially my editor’s cap. It took me fifty times through the book to get it down from sixty-plus minutes to twenty-five. It was the perfect touch, not just the laughter the Herdman family invoked but also the feelings this family had while experiencing Christmas for the very first time. This was truly the reason Jesus came for all of us.

For Christmas 2002, I was put in charge of Christmas dinner for ninety missionaries, and Eddy and I decided to do it alone, another first for me. I also brought back the Herdmans by unanimous request of the elders and sisters who had been there the year before.

We had three different mission presidents in our two years. Our first mission president’s wife, Chris, is a nurse, but when they were called home for medical reasons, I was asked to handle mission medical needs for the two following presidents. This was surprisingly easy; all I had to do was take phone calls from any missionaries with medical problems and then call Dr. Cordon, our regional mission doctor and a senior missionary. He was fabulous. I never had to call him twice, plus he always called me back to keep me informed. I loved getting to know the missionaries. This was a little like being a mom again. And when the missionaries felt better, even though I didn’t do a thing, they thought I was wonderful.
Conclusion

The time we spent as Church Educational System missionaries really was the happiest two years of our lives because we were on Heavenly Father’s errand all the time. We were spared knowing the problems at home that we didn’t really need to know about. We didn’t worry about our three children or their children; we prayed for them always; and we knew Heavenly Father loved them even more and knew their needs even better than we did. So we focused on the work. Eddy and I were on the same wavelength. If we happened to be apart for a couple of hours, we missed each other.

Coming home has been very difficult. We miss our young adult Saints tremendously; we miss the Holy Ghost’s constant inspiration; and we miss friendly, beautiful Pittsburgh. We miss Heavenly Father’s constant care. His concern is still constant, but now we realize how much He sheltered us physically, mentally, emotionally, and environmentally. The joy showered upon us daily was a blessing and a gift. We never felt we earned it.

We felt God’s presence in all we were doing, and we knew what we were doing was what our Heavenly Father wanted us to do—and that was always peaceful and rewarding. That was something we needed at that time in our lives—something we had never known before.

Back home, we have our trials we must endure so we can continue to grow. In Pittsburgh, the Lord gave us experiences, not trials, that we might continually give and serve and experience joy. As we taught and served our mission, we came to know the Savior so much better than we ever had before. It is a marvelous experience to be in the service of the Lord twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. As we studied and served, we learned of the love the Son has for His Father. We understood how the Savior taught. We learned how He suffered for us and was resurrected so that we may all return to Him. We felt closer to the Savior than we had ever felt in our lives. What a wonderful way to spend our senior years! 

We miss friendly, beautiful Pittsburgh.
A few months after eulogizing our paternal grandfather in 1993, my oldest brother was killed in an automobile accident. He was, as Joseph Smith wrote of his older brother Alvin, “the oldest and the noblest of my father’s family.”¹ My professors let me withdraw from some classes and make up work in others. Somehow I endured the semester. My wife, Jennifer, and I spent the next semester in Nauvoo. I fled there for refuge, just as the early Saints did, to escape the emotional difficulties of the past year and to spend time with Jennifer in anticipation of our firstborn. On our way to Nauvoo, we saw our doctor and heard Hannah’s beating heart for the first time. Life going and coming in such succession seemed overwhelming. Nauvoo was good therapy. I visited my ancestors’ graves, walked with Jennifer along the quiet streets at sunset, and listened to Professor Milton Backman impart his extensive knowledge of Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo.

I visited the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River where the early Saints built the temple. It had been so significant. I reflected on the words of an ancestor, Martha Tuttle Gardner, who said she watched Joseph Smith, mourned his death, heard Brigham Young speak “with power even to the convincing of the Saints,” and witnessed the “mantle of Joseph” rest on Brigham’s shoulders. “Then the Prophet Brigham Young,” she continued, “had the Nauvoo Temple finished with a strong guard kept over them as the enemy was continually tryin[g] to
bother them. [When] it was finally finished some endowments were
given there. I received that sacred ordinance there in 1845.” The
elements had taken their toll, and now the temple site seemed like a
cemetery, a peaceful resting place brought to life only by remembering
what happened there.

As early as 1831, the revelations hinted at an endowment of power
awaiting the faithful (see D&C 38). Soon more revelation required the
construction of a temple. The revelations went so far as to promise the
Saints that if they became sanctified, they would behold the Lord in
the temple. Persecution and disobedience prevented the Saints from
building a temple in Missouri, but in Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith
himself quarried stone, Brigham Young finished the interior, and other
Saints consecrated their time, skills, and resources. On April 3, 1836,
the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in that temple, and Joseph received
keys of the holy priesthood, which authorized the temple work we
now know, including a commission to enact anew the ancient endow-
ment of power and to seal families together in an endless chain. Sore
trials followed: bankruptcy, apostasy, an executive order authorizing
the extermination of the Saints from Missouri, a massacre, and impris-
onment. Undaunted, Joseph founded Nauvoo and “contemplated”
building another temple on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi. The
Lord had information to impart, ordinances to administer, covenants
to contract, and power to bestow; He wanted an appropriate place to
do so (see D&C 124).

Even before completion of the temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith
began the sacred work. On May 4, 1842, he endowed a select group.
“I spent the day in the upper part of the store,” Joseph’s history
says, “instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood,
attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communica-
tion of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the
highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood, setting forth . . . all
those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the
fullness of those blessings . . . and come up and abide in the presence
of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the
ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.” On June
27, 1844, angry mobbers killed Joseph Smith to stop him from receiv-
ing and giving more power. Satan, who stirred those men to action,
raged against the Nauvoo Temple as he had in Kirtland, but the Lord
had steeled Brigham Young for the fight. Brigham Young finished the
temple and, beginning December 10, 1845, Martha Tuttle Gardner
and thousands of others received their endowments. Brigham’s foes
attempted to kidnap him. They burned outlying homes and intimidat- ed as best they could, but intimidating Brigham Young proved too much even for the prince of darkness. Finally, they burned the temple, but by then Brigham and the Saints were headed west. Upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young drove his cane into the ground and declared, “Here we shall build a temple to our God.” Given what they had endured, some Saints understandably shrank from the cosmic war the temple represented. “Some say, ‘I do not like to do it, for we never began to build a Temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring.’” Said Brigham, “I want to hear them ring again.”

I learned all this from Professor Backman in the quiet city of Nauvoo. Meanwhile, intense trials lay ahead for Jennifer and me. A viral infection, encephalitis, rendered me completely helpless and delirious. While expecting Hannah, Jennifer prayed and nursed me back to health. My parents flew out, and my father gave me a blessing. I recovered, but doctors told Jennifer not to expect much in the years to come. The swelling of my brain left me moody, anxious, and uncertain. I struggled through my final semester in Provo.

In the weeks between graduation and graduate school, Jennifer, Hannah, and I moved home to Blackfoot, Idaho, where we lived with our parents and where I worked for my father’s engineering company on a road to the Beartrack Gold Mine, high in the mountains of central Idaho’s Salmon River country. The light workload required me to be available to make regular inspections but left me otherwise free. I spent time with the crewmen, but I was out of place. Their filthy language revealed telestial aspirations. A bumper sticker on one of their trucks read, “Earth first, we’ll mine other planets later.” It was clever, I thought, but sad. I spent most of my time on the mountain alone in the unspoiled environment and contemplated the Creation. I delighted in watching the gold flecks sparkle in the streambeds, and one day I saw a black bear cub trundle up and then tumble out of an aspen tree. Best of all, I visited an abandoned nineteenth-century cemetery marked by worn stones overlooking the remains of prospectors and soldiers. I wondered about their grandparents, brothers, wives, and daughters and recorded each stone’s inscription in my field book.

Then early one morning I experienced a vivid metaphorical journey. After an evening at home with Jennifer and Hannah, I left in a tired old truck in the middle of the night to arrive in time for work. Between Blackfoot and Idaho Falls, the freeway slices through Hell’s Half Acre, an ominous ancient lava flow of black, craggy rocks. A few miles farther and the Idaho Falls Temple is seen jutting into the sky.
For miles it appears to be the objective at the end of the road. As I drove into the lava flow, the lights of my truck failed. I slowed. Trucks coming at seventy miles per hour bade me get off the road, but the rocks stopped me from getting off too far. I was blind in the dark and could neither see the edge of the road nor be seen well by oncomers. “What should I do?” I wondered. I enjoyed a distinct impression from the Holy Spirit to make myself as visible as I could. My parents, as ordinance workers in the Idaho Falls Temple, were accustomed to rising early and would be along any minute. I knew they would be passing, and they would save me if I could catch their attention. As soon as I could maneuver the truck toward oncoming traffic, their familiar car passed, slowed, and pulled off to help me. I followed them into the freeway, and, borrowing their light, I made it through the lava flow. A few miles more, contrasting sharply with the darkness that morning, the temple rose at the end of the road. Though I am no singer, solitude freed me to adapt a familiar hymn to my circumstance. “Father in Heaven, I thank thee this day, for loving parents to show me the way. Grateful, I praise thee with songs of delight! Gladly, gladly I’ll walk in the light.”

The temple is a model of the universe. It orients us in time and space. Its covenants anchor us to God. While the temple oriented me that day, the Spirit impressed on my mind the symbolism in the way my parents used light to lead me to the temple through a perilously
straight and narrow passage. As I navigated by borrowed light, the welcoming temple beckoned me. The last vestiges of my adolescent inclination to find leadership restrictive evaporated with the dawning recognition that to go my “own way” was certain destruction (see D&C 1:14–16). I was only too glad to walk in that light. As I did, my dependable parents ensured my successful negotiation of that dangerous terrain.

This essay reflects on the meaning of life in a telestial world, informed by my first experience in, and subsequent visits to, the temple. Yet the sacred nature of temple experiences allows but little commentary, and I do not mean to trifle with sacred things. My intent, rather, is to reflect reverently, in light of the standard works and officially prophetic statements. I refer to some published statements made or used by General Authorities and rich scriptural passages that verify much of what one learns in the temple. My bearings are taken from President Brigham Young’s classic definition, which he gave on April 6, 1853, at the laying of the cornerstone for the Salt Lake Temple: “Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to . . . gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”

On the day of my endowment, I was welcomed to the temple by a small army of quiet, dignified ordinance workers. They appeared angelic. A member of the temple presidency welcomed me, gave helpful instruction, answered questions, and calmed anxieties. My father escorted me everywhere. After the instructions, I received a series of sublime blessings. President Boyd K. Packer described this initial part of the endowment: “The ordinances of washing and anointing are referred to often in the temple as initiatory ordinances. It will be sufficient for our purposes to say only the following: Associated with the endowment are washings and anointings—mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings.” President James E. Faust wrote, “As the Saints come into the sacrosanct washing and anointing rooms and are washed, they will be spiritually cleansed. As they are anointed, they will be renewed and regenerated in soul and spirit.”

“In connection with these ordinances,” President Packer wrote, “in the temple you will be officially clothed in the garment and promised marvelous blessings in connection with it. It is important that you listen carefully as these ordinances are administered and that you try to remember the blessings promised and the conditions upon which they will be realized.” I wanted to remember those blessings. They were
full of clauses that made them dependent on me, and the blessings were guaranteed me only if I desired them enough to meet the conditions upon which they were predicated. This blessing and burden of agency made it important for me to remember my obligations. But there was too much to remember. In the years since my own endowment, I have often returned to the temple to participate in the initiatory ordinances on behalf of others. This produces what Elder John A. Widtsoe called “the sweet joy of saviorhood,” but a more selfish component also motivates my temple attendance. I want to hear the blessings I received often enough to remember them and have them in my mind so I can ponder them wherever I may be. They are sanctifying and empowering. It is good to be reminded of them every day—hence the wearing of the garment.

When President Harold B. Lee interviewed James E. Faust to become a General Authority, President Lee asked only one question: “Do you wear the garments properly? . . . He had learned from experience that how one wears the garment is the expression of how the individual feels about the Church and everything that relates to it. It is a measure of one’s worthiness and devotion to the gospel.” The garment “bear[s] several simple marks of orientation toward the gospel principles of obedience, truth, life, and discipleship in Christ.” We are commanded to don the full armor of God in preparation for our part in the war that began in heaven. President Packer wrote, “The garment represents sacred covenants. It fosters modesty and becomes a shield and protection to the wearer.” But its power is not in the material of which it is made. “The garment,” wrote Hugh Nibley, “is inadequate without the thing that it signifies. . . . It won’t protect you unless you’re true and faithful to your covenant, and only to the degree to which you don’t dishonor your garment has it any significance at all. Only on the condition that you don’t dishonor it, that you’re pure, that you are true and faithful to your covenant—does the garment have any benefit.” As my understanding of the endowment increases, so does my appreciation of the garment and all it signifies. I love what it represents and wish to express my wholehearted, if faltering, devotion to the covenants of which it reminds me.

My endowment continued with dramatized instruction in the doctrines of the Creation, the Fall, and redemption from the Fall through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. These three doctrines pervade our scriptures, and they are the basic components of the plan of salvation. Elder Russell M. Nelson described their connections: “The Creation required the Fall. The Fall required the Atonement. The Atonement
enabled the purpose of the Creation to be accomplished. Eternal life, made possible by the Atonement, is the supreme purpose of the Creation. To phrase that statement in its negative form, if families were not sealed in holy temples, the whole earth would be utterly wasted.”

**Creation**

The purpose of God’s Creation was to endow His children with immortality and eternal life (see Moses 1:36–39). In the premortal world, “God saw these souls that they were good,” and He made plans for their exaltation. Abraham wrote that during the planning “there stood one among them that was like unto God.” Following instructions from His Father, He “said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell.”

The Creators designed the earth as a proving ground, to see whether God’s children “will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.” If so, they “shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever” (Abraham 3:23–26). Doctrine and Covenants 93 explains how this glory is added. The Savior showed how “he received not of the fulness at first, but received grace for grace.” He continued in that pursuit “until he received a fulness” (D&C 93:12–13). He holds Himself up as an example: “I give 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 fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father” (D&C 93:19–20). Christ means precisely what He says. He intends for us to properly worship the Father in His name and by so doing advance by degrees of glory until we literally “come unto the Father . . . and receive of his fulness.” This is done by making and keeping covenants, which are simply promises to keep commandments. Thus, Christ says, “If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness” (D&C 93:20). This conditional construction locates agency. The simple covenant assumes that we have power to keep the commandments or not and therefore to decide whether we will receive the Father’s fulness. This power is agency. “The power is in them,” one revelation says, “wherein they are agents unto themselves” (D&C 58:28).
The Fall

After the Creation, Adam and Eve were introduced into a garden eastward in Eden. This space, or, as section 93 calls it, “sphere,” served as a place where Adam and Eve could function independently of God. Otherwise, they could not “act” for themselves, and God could not “prove them” to see if they were willing to grow by degrees toward His fulness. Without spending time in a space outside of God’s presence, Adam and Eve and their posterity would not have a self-existence. Their experience in this sphere became independent only insofar as Adam and Eve were enabled to act for themselves—thus the location of mortals in a place outside of God’s immediate oversight (see D&C 93:30–31).

Occasionally, my parents used to go away for a weekend, leaving me at home with strict instructions on how to behave. I was able then to act as I wished. I was independent, free to act, and also terribly responsible. I was free because no one could coerce me to act on the instructions I had received. I was responsible because my parents inevitably returned to hold me accountable for the way I acted in my free condition upon the knowledge they had given me.

To test whether they would use their power to keep His commandments, God gave Adam and Eve strict laws. Agency and commandments are inseparable. “I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself,” the Lord said of Adam, “and I gave unto him commandment” (D&C 29:35). We sometimes suppose that commandments restrict agency, but without law there is no agency. Without law there is no power to choose, for there is no choice. As Lehi explained to Jacob, “If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:13).

So postmodern relativism, which includes the idea that no absolute laws exist, undermines agency. It is not empowering doctrine. Moreover, much like Calvinism, genetic predisposition has become a doctrine of biological predestination, convincing many that they are not agents empowered to act for themselves but simply matter to be acted upon by unaccountable chemicals. This subtle doctrine is embraced by people who have long since rejected John Calvin’s cruel dogma that
one has no control over his or her destiny. “Of course,” Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, “our genes, circumstances, and environments matter very much, and they shape us significantly. Yet there remains an inner zone in which we are sovereign unless we abdicate. In this zone lies the essence of our individuality and our personal accountability.”¹⁹ One must therefore be careful of man-made philosophies aimed at subtly undermining our agency. Such doctrines are very popular. But one must not embrace ideas hatched by mortals or, worse yet, by devils, without studying diligently and waiting patiently for further light and increased knowledge. We must avoid pulling into the bewildering traffic of this world’s faddish philosophies without a clearly illuminated path through the darkness of Hell’s Half Acre.

Satan exerts tremendous creative energy and gets perverse satisfaction from his quest to deceive us. As Lehi explained, “Because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind. Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies, . . . Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil” (2 Nephi 2:18). The book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price includes Eve’s reply. She said, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said—Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Moses 4:8–9). Satan countered, compounding the first lie of his long career: “Ye shall not surely die,” he said, hypocritically attempting to persuade Eve that God intended to oppress her by keeping her ignorant. “God doth know,” he said, “that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Eve then “took of the fruit . . . and did eat, and also gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat” (Moses 4:11–12). In doing so, they fell that we might be—that is, so that we could have a self-existence in this sphere to decide for ourselves what we want to be when we “grow up” (see D&C 93:27–31, 109:15).

Then, the book of Moses explains that Adam and Eve “sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons.

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, . . . and Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God. . . .

“And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him: Where goest thou?

“And he said: I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid,
because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself.

“And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam: Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so thou shouldst surely die?”

Adam answered, “The woman thou gavest me, and commandest that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat” (Moses 4:13–18). Next, “the Lord God, said unto the woman: What is this thing which thou hast done?” Eve answered, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat” (Moses 4:19). God then called Satan to account for exercising his agency in violation of divine law. “Because thou hast done this,” God told him, putting agency right back where it belonged, “thou shalt be cursed” (Moses 4:20; emphasis added). Adam and Eve were also subject to the law. They knew that death must follow the eating of forbidden fruit. Their partaking necessarily brought death, which “passed upon all . . . to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator” (2 Nephi 9:6).

“The Lord God caused that [Adam and Eve] should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of [their] transgression, wherein [they] became spiritually dead” (D&C 29:41). This Fall from the presence of God left Adam and Eve in the telestial world, where they could exercise their agency more fully. Nothing short of an infinite atonement by a divine yet independent Redeemer could restore them to God’s presence now (see 2 Nephi 9:6–7; Alma 34:8–9). Fortunately, the Creators planned for that eventuality along with the Creation. Mercifully, “the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son” (D&C 29:42). Messengers were sent bearing the good news: “The Messiah cometh in the fulness 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 forever” (2 Nephi 2:26).

**Knowledge of Good and Evil**

We are akin to Adam and Eve. We have agency: the power is in us. We have clearly defined, divine laws. Satan suggests alternatives, giving us choices. We have enough knowledge to make informed choices (see Helaman 14:30–31). We all embark on the telestial world with just enough knowledge to make our sojourn in this sphere a worthy test and a commandment to receive more knowledge until we have fulness—that is, until we know everything (see D&C 93:27–28). That
Endowed with Power

knowledge is gained by experience in obeying the laws of God. Not all knowledge is equally valuable. It is quite possible to be “ever learning, and [yet] never . . . come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7), truth that the scriptures elsewhere call the knowledge of God (see D&C 84:19). Through his encounter with Moses, if he did not already know, Satan learned that a person who possesses the knowledge of God will dismiss the devil as a pitiful substitute (see Moses 1). As section 93 puts it, “light and truth forsake that evil one” (D&C 93:37). No wonder, then, that he tries untiringly to keep us ignorant of God. All tyrants try to oppress people by keeping them ignorant. Some tyrants have discovered that the worst thing to teach a slave is how to read scripture. The Puritans recognized, as one of them wrote, that the “chief project of that old deluder, Satan, [is] to keep men [and women] from the knowledge of the Scriptures.”  

The Savior equated the knowledge of God with eternal life (see John 17:3; see also D&C 132:24). In Joseph Smith’s words, “It is impossible . . . to be saved in ignorance” (D&C 130:6). This most prized knowledge is gained not by book learning but by extensive hands-on application of God’s laws in this specific sphere.

We live in a telestial world that is a place of death and deception, characterized by a predatory, eat-or-be-eaten mentality. Here one must eat and drink or die, and daily bread must be gathered by the sweat of one’s own face or by the exploitation of others. This is Satan’s kingdom, and he is very proud of it. Here money is power. This is a Darwinian world, where it seems obvious that survival is for the fittest, though both “survival” and “fit” turn out to be hollow constructs as one becomes numb, persuaded that this is a world with “no purpose” (2 Nephi 2:11). It is an attempted tyranny, including a tyranny over the mind, except that God “hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free” (Helaman 14:30). By sending messengers to impart knowledge, God thwarts Satan’s attempted coup d’état even as He preserves agency. Prophets are mocked and hated and stoned and lynched, yet more are sent. Holy temples increasingly dot an otherwise bleak spiritual landscape, serving as oases of priesthood power. Meanwhile, Satan takes satisfaction in winning battles for individual souls—thus his relentless propaganda. With a wide demographic of the carnal, sensual, and devilish, his tyrannical yet seductive advertising can hardly miss. Discouraging as this is, as long as two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord, the establishment regime will be checked (see Matthew 18:20). Despite the oppression, there is ample reason to rejoice. The messengers have returned, bringing their knowledge and power.
Now “the prisoners shall go free” if they want to (D&C 128:22). The Creation, it turns out, was purposeful after all (see Moses 1).

Redemption through the Atonement of Christ

Adam and Eve do not belong in this telestial world. They increasingly feel like “strangers and pilgrims” in proportion to their understanding of their plight and their potential (Hebrews 11:13; see also 1 Peter 2:11, D&C 45:13). Still, this dangerous environment helps them exercise agency, and thus they gain the knowledge that only independent experience brings (see D&C 93:30–31). They feel their fallenness keenly but persevere in the face of temptation. They choose, of their own free will, to obey the laws of God. They therefore gain more knowledge and advance by degrees until they know how to regain God’s presence. Authorized servants administer ordinances to Adam and Eve in which they make covenants that bind them to God. This all requires enormous faith, for they are “shut out” from the presence of God and must trust the servants He decides to send (Moses 5:4). Moreover, God does not outline all the specific laws in the beginning. He requires Adam and Eve to begin the process of redemption by vowing solemnly to live by laws they do not yet know. If they willingly exercise their agency to have faith of this magnitude, He accepts the Atonement of the Redeemer as a sacrifice for their transgressions.

To focus their minds on the “infinite and eternal sacrifice” (Alma 34:10) of their Redeemer, God commanded Adam and Eve to worship Him by obeying the law of sacrifice. They were to offer the first and best of all that Creation provided for their temporal needs. “And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord” (Moses 5:5). He therefore received further light and knowledge, which comes by degrees and follows obedience to the light one already has. A messenger asked Adam, “Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth” (Moses 5:6–7; emphasis added). Obedience to the law of sacrifice brought Adam and Eve further light, which the revelations use synonymously with law, in this case the law of the gospel (see D&C 88:13).

God said to Adam and Eve, “If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, . . . ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, . . . and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be
given you” (Moses 6:52). In obedience to the gospel law, Adam and Eve received baptism, “and in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam” and testified of Christ and the redemption, “that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.”

To Adam and Eve, the law of the gospel was good news indeed. “Adam blessed God and was filled [with the Holy Ghost]. . . . Blessed be the name of God,” he said.

“And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.”

Satan came too, declaring his own law. And many “loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish. And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent; and as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved; and as many as believed not and repented not should be damned; and the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled” (Moses 5:9–15).

Obedience to the gospel results in still more light. Adam and Eve received the Holy Ghost, and by its power they grew toward God’s fulness, craving light and knowledge. Adam asked, “Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water?” upon which he was treated to a profound revelation, recorded in Moses 6, strikingly similar to the endowment, in which he was given to understand the significance of the Fall and the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. When the revelation ended, God summed it up: “Behold, I say unto you: This is the plan of salvation unto all . . . through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time” (Moses 6:53, 62).

An Act of Solemn Promising

In the temple, we make sacred covenants to obey the laws of God. “We make the vows of chastity,” President Faust wrote, “and have our lives consecrated to holy purposes.” Elder James E. Talmage added, “The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth; . . . to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be ready to receive her king,—The Lord Jesus Christ.” Simply put, we belong
to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We give ourselves to its cause of our own free will. The rest of our time in this sphere is designed to see whether we really meant it. If we keep our promises, we will gain light and knowledge by degrees until we are capable of regaining the presence of God (see D&C 88:68, 93:1).

Despite our fallen state, our mortal limitations, and our natural inclinations, we can couple ourselves with the Redeemer of the world by making covenants. Keeping these covenants enables us to transcend this telestial world until we have power over it.

Life in a telestial sphere impressed these truths on my mind beginning in 1994. Disheartened by death, disease, medical bills, and the demands of providing for and protecting a growing family in a filthy, competitive world, I felt like Joseph Smith when he wrote that Alvin’s death caused “pangs of sorrow that swelled my youthful bosom and almost burst my tender heart.”24 But that summer brought life-changing events. A princess and a prophet pointed me toward the temple. On July 1, my daughter Hannah was born, an heir to all the blessings of
Endowed with Power

the everlasting covenant. Days earlier, President Howard W. Hunter inaugurated his brief ministry as the President of the Church by inviting “members of the Church to establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. . . . Let us be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people.” He added, “Let us hasten to the temple as frequently as time and means and personal circumstances allow. Let us go not only for our kindred dead, but let us go also for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety which is provided within those hallowed and consecrated walls. The temple is a place of beauty, it is a place of revelation, it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It should be holy unto us.”

Now my princess is nine years old. She and her siblings continue to inspire my quest for temple blessings. I officiated in her baptism as she embraced the law of the gospel and covenanted to grow by degrees of glory toward fulness. The setting for that sacred experience was Temple Beach in Laie, Hawaii, and as we emerged from the surf, the house of the Lord beckoned us via a straight and narrow uphill passage. We could read in its architecture an invitation for us to use it as a stairway to heaven. We understood that such a climb would take us step by step back into the presence of our Heavenly Father, whom we miss along with others who are farther along than we.

On my parents’ fiftieth anniversary, they gathered their posterity to the new Nauvoo Temple. There, again, I could sense and see the significance of the powerful endowment Joseph gave to Brigham, that Brigham gave to Martha Tuttle Gardner, and that I had received fourteen years earlier in a similarly sacred setting. Returning to Nauvoo clarified the meaning the temple gives my sojourn in a telestial world. The impressive new edifice, so appropriately imposing on the landscape, makes right all that goes wrong. When the temple was not there, I wondered whether this world was a cruel, pointless existence dominated by tyrants of a hundred varieties. Now I know that the ordinances of the Lord’s house endow our time in this sphere with purpose even as they testify that we are strangers here.

Everything meaningful to me is derived from the Lord’s house—temple covenants inform the lives of service and sacrifice lived by my ancestors and, most influentially, my parents. Our endowment is a powerful influence for goodness and an antidote to our natural disposition (see Mosiah 3:19; see also D&C 121:34–46). The seals that bind us to parents, children, and spouses are the most precious of bonds. I feel the truth of President Hinckley’s declaration that “these unique
and wonderful buildings, and the ordinances administered therein, represent the ultimate in our worship. These ordinances become the most profound expressions of our theology.”

I long to worship ultimately and express profoundly. To paraphrase Elder Maxwell, I long not only to pass through the temple often but to let the holy temple pass through me.

Notes

2. Testimony of Martha Tuttle Gardner, in author’s possession.
4. Journal History, July 28, 1847, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
8. I tried to follow President Boyd K. Packer’s rule for dealing with the sacred ordinances of the temple and used only previously published statements and scriptural passages (see Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982]). I am grateful to President Glen Lung of the Hawai‘i Temple and to his counselors for their careful reading of this manuscript and their advice on how I might deal with sacred matters without profaning them. One can see authorized images of the interior of the Idaho Falls Temple in Delbert V. Groberg, *The Idaho Falls Temple* (Salt Lake City: Publisher’s Press, 1985).
13. “Once only may a person receive the temple endowment for himself, but innumerable times may he receive it for those gone from the earth. Whenever he does so, he performs an unselfish act for which no earthly recompense is available. He tastes in part the sweet joy of saviorhood. He rises towards the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all” (John A. Widtsoe, “Editorial,” *Improvement Era*, April 1936, 228).
“For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behoveth him and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord” (Helaman 14:15).
Two principal steps in the plan of salvation are the Fall of Adam and Eve and the Atonement wrought by Christ. In theological terms, the two are juxtaposed. As Paul says, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Over the years, I have sought ways to explain the necessity of both the Fall and the Atonement to my students. Since I teach comparative world religions, I found myself using traditional Christian theology to help students understand the similarities between Latter-day Saints and other Christians on these concepts and to help them understand the contributions of Restoration thought. I do not use the comparison to denigrate the beliefs of other Christians, for their theology is firmly rooted in their interpretations of the Bible. However, because Latter-day Saints have canonical texts beyond the Bible, we believe we have additional information concerning the Fall and the Atonement. We do not offer this understanding in pride or smugness but rather as an addition to the basic principles that other Christians already understand. In other words, we build on a foundation already laid.

With this in mind, I would like to share an understanding of these central doctrines using a comparative method of presentation. Of course, I am giving my own insights into the materials considered and am not speaking for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**Traditional Christianity’s View of the Fall**

Traditional Christianity sees the Garden of Eden and the Fall differently than the Latter-day Saints. The traditional position is rooted in the book of Genesis, whereas the Latter-day Saint position is based
on the book of Moses, Joseph Smith’s inspired translation of Genesis 1:1–6:13. Traditional Christianity holds that Adam and Eve were mortal in the Garden of Eden, that they could procreate, and that they had the ability to choose to follow God’s commands or not to do so. They were created to live in the garden in the presence of God. To be truly human meant that they lived with God, for humanity’s chief end “is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” They were, however, given a commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did, they would die (see Genesis 2:17). Satan cajoled Eve into eating from the tree with the promise that if she and Adam did so, they would be like gods. Traditional theology understands this decision as an act of pride that challenges God’s position and is thus the ultimate sin. The results of this act were the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, their ultimate deaths, and a warping of human nature to a greater or lesser degree, since true humanity exists only as human beings live in God’s presence.

Thus, the Fall was a disaster for humanity. Because of what Eve did, human beings lost their birthright. They were ejected from the presence of God. In the thought of many traditions, Adam and Eve no longer could choose between good and evil but were turned completely away from God. Humanity inherited the sin of Adam and Eve (original sin)—the sin of pride—and that sin is passed from generation to generation and can be overcome only by an act of God. In several Christian traditions, free will was left behind in the garden. As Paul wrote, “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Roman 3:12). The Atonement is thus necessary for all individuals if they want to enter the presence of God, and the Atonement is wholly God’s act without human cooperation in many Christian traditions, especially those that have their roots in John Calvin.

A Latter-day Saint Perspective

Latter-day Saints have a very different view from that sketched above. Rather than seeing the Fall as a disaster, we see Eve as a heroine and the Fall as an immense step forward in humanity’s eternal progression. To understand this position, we must begin in the premortal realm.

Latter-day Saints believe that three things are eternal: intelligence or intelligences, matter, and energy. Human beings are as eternal as God is because their intelligences are uncreated and self-existing. At some point in time, the Father clothed intelligences with spirit bodies by a process unknown to us. Two of these spirit children were Adam and Eve. They, along with all others who were destined for earthly life,
were commanded in that premortal realm to multiply and replenish the earth (see Moses 2:28). God then placed Adam and Eve in the garden.

It is important to notice that in Latter-day Saint theology there is a tension between the Garden of Eden and the earth. Adam and Eve were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth, not the garden. Thus, the garden became a transitional destination for them. The plan of salvation given by the Father called for His children to live in mortality subject to good and evil, opportunities and trials, joys and sadness, success and failure, and growth and death. It was to the earth, not the garden, that the Savior would come. Latter-day Saints believe that the plan of salvation never called for Adam and Eve to remain in the garden—a belief in opposition to traditional Christian theology. They had to leave it, or the whole plan would be thwarted. This basic principle is essential to understanding what took place in the garden.

After placing Adam in the garden, God said, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Moses 3:16–17; emphasis added). Eve was also given this command. It is important to remember that the plan of salvation demands that Adam and Eve and their offspring experience mortality, which culminates inevitably in death, on the earth.

At this point, Satan appeared on the scene and tried to get Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. In other words, he hoped to thwart God’s purposes. Eve chose to eat the fruit (for God had said that the choice was up to Adam and Eve) so that she and Adam could enter mortality with its inevitable opportunities as well as its consequence of mortal death. But only in mortality can growth take place with the possibility of becoming all that God wishes His children to be—that is, like Him. By leaving the security of the garden, Adam and Eve and all their posterity had the potential to become—through Christ—all that God would have them be. Had they remained in the garden, there would have been no human race, and the spirit children of God would have been forever locked in their first estate, with no future before them.

What then does this say about the commandment God gave Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? The answer is that nowhere in scripture do we have a full account of what took place in the garden surrounding that command. It cannot have meant that Adam and Eve were not to leave the garden, for that would
have contradicted the plan of salvation itself. We must look for further insights to provide the command’s context, a context that is partially missing in the canonical accounts.

What do we know for certain about Adam, Eve, and the garden? We know that the garden was a transitional location. We know that Adam and Eve were told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they were also told that it was up to them to decide whether they would eat. We know that if they did so, the penalty would be death. We also know that to progress, they were expected to eat of the tree, and we know that they did what God expected and required of them. What, therefore, did God really say to them in the garden? I suggest that He might have said something like the following: “If you want to stay in the Garden of Eden with no cares and no possibility for growth, you should not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, if you desire to grow and receive all that I have in store for you, you will have to leave the garden. If you eat of the tree, you will be cast out of the garden into the earth and into mortality, and you will die both temporally and spiritually, but you will open the door for yourselves and for all humanity to receive eternal life like I have. The choice is yours.” In other words, God gave them information.

Eve understood this, at least in part, and chose to leave the garden, taking with her Adam, who realized the correctness of the decision. Thus, the first step in our eternal progression was taken, and the hosts of heaven shouted for joy, for they had a future—thanks to the courage of Adam and Eve.

What of the transgression of Adam and Eve? If they did only what God asked of them, how could there be transgression? Elder Dallin H. Oaks provided insight when he said the following:

When Adam and Eve received the first commandment, they were in a transitional state, no longer in the spirit world but with physical bodies not yet subject to death and not yet capable of procreation. They could not fulfill the Father’s first commandment without transgressing the barrier between the bliss of the Garden of Eden and the terrible trials and wonderful opportunities of mortal life. . . . It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and “Adam fell that men might be” [2 Nephi 2:25]. . . . Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: “I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin . . . for it was something that Adam and Eve had
to do!” (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 1:114–15). . . . [This] echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited.8

Notice that Elder Oaks speaks of “transgressing the barrier between . . . the Garden . . . [and] mortal life” and transgressing “the limits of Eden.” As suggested above, the law, or what I called information, given by God had only to do with staying in the garden. It stated the parameters within which Adam and Eve had to operate if they wished to remain in the garden. To choose to leave the garden, however, was not to go against God’s will, for His will was that they leave, since that was part of the plan of salvation. They chose to leave that they might grow, thereby transgressing the parameters associated with staying in the garden. Thus, they were ushered by God into a new and challenging dimension of life. They entered mortality, where they would face challenges of all kinds, but these were for their sakes (see Moses 4:23)—that is, for their own good and growth. In the garden, they were immortal and unable to procreate but possessed agency; on the earth, they were mortal, could procreate, and still could distinguish good from evil. They could choose for or against God. They could truly worship God, since they could also choose to turn away from Him.

Adam and Eve sum up the consequences of their choice well: “And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression [or choice] my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God” (Moses 5:10). Eve gently reminded him that were it not for their choice, which Adam would not have made without her (she having heard the whisperings of the Spirit), they would not have had blessings even greater than those that Adam articulates. “And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression [or choice] we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

Thus, Eve, for Latter-day Saints, becomes the heroine who, by her choice, gives all humankind the opportunity for eternal life. Adam and
Eve, by their decision to fall from the garden into the telestial environment, conveyed to all their posterity spiritual death, which is separation from the Father, and temporal death, which is death of the physical body. The basic spiritual nature of humanity was not altered—we were and are still able to say both yes and no to God. We still retain our agency, but we have within us good and evil inclinations that may be followed. Satan tries to lead us to follow our evil inclinations—“the natural man”—while the Lord Jesus Christ calls us to follow our good or “spiritual” inclinations so that we may return to the presence of Heavenly Father. All of us receive these possibilities and consequences from the choice made by Adam and Eve. In Latter-day Saint thought, the Atonement deals with the consequences of that choice and enhances the possibilities of all human beings.

The Atonement

The Atonement overcomes the consequences of the Fall and human sin. While still wanting to work in a comparative manner, I will not separate traditional and Latter-day Saint approaches to this topic as clearly as I did for the previous one because they share much in common. In this case, I will speak from a Latter-day Saint perspective and indicate as we progress how it differs from mainline Christian theology.

Within the traditional Christian theological discussion of the Atonement, some have believed that the Atonement was unconditional in its effects; in other words, all persons received its benefits. They argued that Jesus died for the sins of the world, and if He did so, there were no sins left for which persons could be punished. This position usually led to a doctrine of universal salvation. On the other hand, the majority of Christians have held that the Atonement is conditional in nature, that persons have to appropriate it in some way for themselves. Normally, this meant that to be saved, they at a minimum had to have personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This position led to a belief that only some persons—those who choose Christ or those who are the “elect” among Calvinists—are saved through the Atonement.

Latter-day Saints do not believe the issue is an either-or situation but rather hold that both aspects apply. We believe that certain unconditional aspects of the Atonement affect all human beings, regardless of their faith. At the same time, we believe that certain conditional aspects of the Atonement are predicated on some response or action of the human being. In Latter-day Saint thought, the unconditional aspects of the Atonement deal with the effects of the Fall, whereas the conditional aspects deal with individual sin.
The unconditional aspects of the Atonement. As a result of our first parents’ choice, all humanity inherited both temporal and spiritual death. We clearly understand temporal death; it is the death of the body and the culmination of mortality. Spiritual death is separation from the Father. That is why Jehovah is the active deity throughout the Old Testament history. In conjunction with Him, the Holy Ghost has always worked throughout human history. Thus, since temporal and spiritual death are the unconditional consequences of the Fall, the Atonement must deal with these two elements. And deal with them it does. Temporal death is unequivocally overcome by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As noted before, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22; emphasis added). Here the emphasis is on the latter part of the statement, for saint and sinner alike will be resurrected; thus, temporal death is overcome for all. The issue becomes less clear for students when asked whether the effects of spiritual death are universally overcome for all. Many say that they are not, holding that overcoming spiritual death depends upon individuals accepting Christ. They are not wholly wrong in this statement, but they miss a step in the process by taking this position so quickly.

The second Article of Faith states, “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.” Since spiritual death is a universal consequence of Adam and Eve’s choice, if it is not overcome for all by the Atonement, then the second Article of Faith is not true. Spiritual death would still be in effect, and we would be cut off from God for something we did not do. In essence, some form of original sin would have been transmitted from Adam and Eve to all their descendants. It is precisely against this that the second Article of Faith argues.

What then is the reality? Spiritual death is overcome for all in that all will return to the Father for judgment in His presence. Three Book of Mormon passages tell us this clearly:

Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered. Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch
as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved. And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him. (2 Nephi 2:6–10; emphasis added)

Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. (Alma 11:44)

For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behoveth him and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord. Yea, behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death—that spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual. But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord. (Helaman 14:15–17; emphasis added)

If a return to the Father’s presence were not to occur, judgment and exclusion from Him would have little meaning, for we would not know what we had lost. Only through returning to the Father can those who will ultimately be excluded from His presence by the Son understand the depth of their loss (see John 5:22, 27). Thus, the question is not whether all persons will eventually return to the presence of the Father (they will) but rather whether they will get to stay. The conditional effects of the Atonement resolve this issue. Hence, the unconditional effects arising from the choice of our first parents—temporal and spiritual death—are unconditionally removed by the Atonement in the form of the Resurrection and a return to the Father’s presence for judgment. All who are the descendants of Adam and Eve are made alive physically and spiritually (see figure 1).
The conditional aspects—and what we must do to benefit. But to what degree are people made spiritually alive? The degree to which we enjoy life beyond death is predicated on the degree to which we receive the effects of the Atonement in the manner that the Lord has prescribed. This is the conditional element. Human beings do not set the ground rules for proper reception of the Atonement; God does. If we choose to access the Atonement in the ways and places that God offers it to us, we may enjoy all that God has in store for us. However, if we ignore God’s ways, we will not receive all that He wishes us to have.

The conditional effects of the Atonement from a Latter-day Saint perspective begin with the assumption that all human beings have sinned and need to have the Atonement applied to them. This perspective also assumes that humans may stand before God with one of two attitudes—humility or pride. We will first follow the results of humility.

Humility. If persons stand before God with humility, they will do all that He asks them to do—that is, they will receive the effects of the Atonement into their lives through the channels of grace that God offers to them. The first of these channels is known among Latter-day Saints as the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, which are articulated in the fourth Article of Faith: “We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From a general Christian perspective, persons who do not know Christ do not realize that they need a savior. They have no tension in their lives between what God calls them to...
be and what they are. It is the encounter with Jehovah (Jesus) that creates a profound awareness of human inadequacy before God. We see this in Isaiah’s encounter with Jehovah in the temple. His response to the vision is not, “Wow! I’ve seen God!” but rather, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5). We find precisely the same reaction to Jesus (this time it is Jesus rather than the premortal Jehovah) in Luke 5:8. Following the great catch of fish, Peter falls down at Jesus’s feet and says, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” In both instances, it is the encounter with the second member of the Godhead that leads to a realization of personal sin and a need to change. Thus, it is the Christian Paul who exclaims, “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Roman 7:19, 24–25). This is the tension of the Christian life for those who have encountered Jesus.

Repentance. This encounter leads to the second principle of the gospel, repentance. This sense of desperation before Christ leads Christians to realize their need to change, while people’s faith in Christ gives them the courage to confront their sins. With Him there is hope for the future despite our human nature.

Repentance is a radical change of direction in a sinner’s life. It is the product of being born again in Christ (traditional Christian terms) or experiencing a mighty change of heart (Latter-day Saint terminology). Repentance is the human commitment to live as God would have us live. It is the process of turning from human interests to God’s interests. It is being obedient to God’s commands and seeking to do the works that Christ would have us do.

Having said this, I know of no thinking Christian who does not believe that the Atonement is appropriated through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and through repentance. Latter-day Saints are at one with their brothers and sisters of all Christian denominations on these two principles. But Latter-day Saints see these as incomplete in themselves.

Baptism. Latter-day Saints believe that baptism for the remission of sins is an essential ordinance (sacrament) of the gospel, and there is no salvation without it for those who have attained the age of accountability because God has commanded this ordinance. Baptism must be by full immersion and be administered by a person who holds the
authoritative priesthood of God, which resides only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because of this belief in the essential role of the authoritative priesthood, Latter-day Saints evangelize Christians and non-Christians alike. We know that our Christian brothers and sisters know Christ, but without the essential ordinances of the gospel administered by the priesthood, nobody can receive all that the Father has in store. Latter-day Saints believe that there is “more” to Mormonism. First and foremost, that “more” is the authority exercised by the priesthood.

As with other Christians, Latter-day Saints see baptism as a symbol of dying and rising with Christ. But it is more. It is a sign of a person’s willingness to do all that the Father asks. It is a sign of obedience or discipleship. Alma the Elder puts it this way:

> Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

> Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

> Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you? (Mosiah 18:8–10)

Latter-day Saints understand the act of baptism to be a covenant among themselves, Christ, and the Father that enables the Holy Ghost to be in their lives. A significant facet of this is discipleship, which seeks to follow the commandments of God. Baptism is not merely entry into the Church but the beginning of a way of life—a Spirit-filled life—and the covenants are renewed weekly with the sacrament (meaning the Lord’s Supper, or the Eucharist).

Most other Christian traditions emphasize baptism as a necessary part of Christian life. However, if one professes faith in Christ and dies before receiving baptism, most traditions would hold that the person is saved. Even Roman Catholicism has softened its stance, stating that desire to be baptized is sufficient. Some traditions, like some Baptists, claim that without baptism a person is not saved, so there is no further hope for that individual. In contrast, Latter-day Saints are unique in
claiming that the gospel is preached beyond the veil of death. Even so, those who receive the gospel in the spirit world must receive baptism by proxy. This is one of the essential ordinances done for the dead in the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The story of Naaman, the Syrian general who had leprosy, is an excellent example of why baptism must be done as God asked (see 2 Kings 5:1–15). As we know, Naaman had leprosy. An Israelite maid in his retinue told him that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal him, so Naaman traveled to Israel to see the prophet Elisha. However, Elisha simply sent his servant out to tell Naaman to wash in the river Jordan seven times and he would be healed. Naaman was offended that the prophet had not met him himself and went away angry. Finally, one of his officers reminded him that he would have done something difficult if he had been asked to do so. Therefore, why not do something simple? Naaman did, and he was healed. Had he not followed the directions of God through the prophet Elisha, he would have retained the leprosy. Had he washed in a Syrian river, he would not have been healed. He had to do what God asked of him. Then, and only then, did he benefit. The same is true of baptism. If God asks us to demonstrate our faith in Him by being baptized under the hands of a person holding the priesthood of God and if we choose not to do so, we are culpable and can never receive the fullest of God’s blessings. Obedience is not a dirty word but rather is part of the necessary human response to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do the works Christ calls us to do.

The essential nature of baptism for the remission of sins for those who have reached the age of accountability separates Latter-day Saints from other Christians. Without baptism under the hands of one holding the authority of the priesthood, the ordinance or sacrament is not saving. It may lead us closer to Christ and strengthen our faith, but it is still not a saving ordinance. Thus, the issue of priesthood authority is the primary issue separating Latter-day Saints from other Christians.

*Gift of the Holy Ghost.* A well-known passage in the Book of Mormon states: “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that *it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do*” (2 Nephi 25:23; emphasis added).

Many Latter-day Saints understand this to mean that grace completes whatever human beings are unable to do toward their own salvation. Thus, for many, there is no rest in the gospel. There is a constant striving and fear that they have not done enough to merit or earn
grace sufficient for their salvation. But grace earned or merited is *not grace*. It is precisely because so many Latter-day Saints misunderstand this text that Stephen E. Robinson wrote his book *Believing Christ.* He sought to teach that grace and works are not synonymous.

Is there another way to look at 2 Nephi 25:23 than the one that sees grace completing human works? What does God really expect human beings to do to appropriate the Atonement of Jesus Christ? We have already answered that question when we spoke of the first principles of the gospel. God expects us to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to repent of our sins, and to be baptized for the remission of our sins. When we do as He has asked, we are in the kingdom of God. We are not still standing on the outside looking in.

When encountered by God through Christ, we have the ability to say both yes and no to Him. If we say yes, we will want to repent and receive baptism under the hands of one holding the authority of the priesthood. This is all that we can do. We can accept these three channels of grace, channels that uniquely access Jesus Christ, and “present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [our] reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). When we have come to God through Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism, the Father gives us a gift—the gift of the Holy Ghost—through the laying on of hands by one holding priesthood authority. This gift does two things: (1) it is God’s affirmation that though not perfect in ourselves, we stand before God clothed in the perfection of Christ and (2) it provides the power to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ, a power not inherent in the natural person.

One of the privileges of being a bishop is the opportunity to ask the temple recommend questions of ward members. When I asked my ward members if they had a testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I always received a firm “yes.” But I followed that with the question, “If you were to die tonight, would you go to the celestial kingdom?” This is when they began to squirm because they did not understand the Atonement and how it is received. They believed that they had to be a disciple of Jesus before they could receive grace, when in fact discipleship is the *result* of having received grace.

Next, I asked them if the Holy Ghost was present in their lives. Inevitably, the answer was again “yes.” I then explained that the Holy Ghost was God’s gift to affirm that He approved of them. They were not perfect, but they participated in Christ’s perfection through the Holy Ghost, which applies the Atonement daily to each one of us, if we let the Spirit do so. The Holy Ghost is God’s seal on us in the same
way that a seal validates a document.

A dynamic relationship exists among the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, and human responsibility. Some Christian traditions focus on the role of Christ’s Atonement and the Holy Ghost to the exclusion of human responsibility. Some Latter-day Saints focus on human responsibility to the exclusion of the Atonement and the Holy Ghost. Neither approach is fully correct because all three elements must be present. We are called by God to receive Christ, repent, and be baptized. In response, He gives the Holy Ghost, who applies the Atonement to us daily. Thus, if the Holy Ghost is present in our lives, we have a direct, experiential witness from God that were we to die tonight, we would go to the celestial kingdom. Our response to other Christians who ask us if we are saved should be, “Yes, because the Holy Ghost is in my life.” If, however, the Spirit is not with us, we should repent and bring our lives back into harmony with the channels of grace that God has so graciously offered to us so that we might return to Him through Christ Jesus our Lord. The Atonement becomes operative for us, and Christ bears the consequences of our personal sins for us when the Spirit resides with us.

*Enduring to the end.* While not formally one of the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, enduring is something of which we often speak as Latter-day Saints. Enduring to the end is often understood as gritting our teeth and just hanging on day by day. But to live life in this manner is to forget that we exist “that [we] might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). There must be more to enduring than we see on the surface, even though the word *endure* or some form of it is used in the Book of Mormon twenty-four times and in the Doctrine and Covenants fifteen times. In reality, *endure* is shorthand for the full phrase that is used four times in the Doctrine and Covenants: “endure in faith” (D&C 20:25, 29; 63:20; 101:35). Thus, this principle leads us back to the first principle, which is “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” We are to endure in our relationship with the Savior day in and day out no matter what we encounter, for He is God’s ultimate channel for grace.

But part of enduring in faith is to find Christ in all the places where He makes Himself available to us, and the most constant and available channel is the temple. Often I will abbreviate *endure* as *end*. *End* can mean to endure in faith, but to me it also means *endowment*. The endowment is the ultimate revelation of the meaning of the Savior in the lives of Latter-day Saints. Latter-day Saints who do not take advantage of this special channel to Christ are no better off than their Protestant and Catholic neighbors, for the temple is the ultimate sym-
bol for Latter-day Saints. It is there that we can be in closest contact with the Lord as well as be a part of the community of Saints both living and dead.

For a Latter-day Saint to claim to be a faithful member of the Church and not go to the temple if given the opportunity is to deny the very faith he or she professes. Discipleship means not only professing to believe in Christ but also coming to Him wherever He makes Himself available through the priesthood, and He is most available in the ordinances of the Church—baptism, confirmation, the sacrament, blessings, and particularly in the ordinances of the endowment. Christ has called us to come to the Father through Him, and discipleship includes obedience by coming in the way the Father has asked us to come. We are not to come merely in faith and repentance but in all the other ways the Father has provided for us.

God’s Justice Satisfied

Latter-day Saints often say that mercy cannot rob justice. What they, along with other Christians, are saying is that God’s law is to be taken seriously. It is not sufficient to say that we are sorry for having broken it. If God’s law is broken, justice expects a penalty to be paid. This is why repentance is not the first principle of the gospel. Instead, it is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who wish to have their sins removed cannot merely repent; they must come to Christ because He will bear their sins away. In a very real sense, repentance is an act of love for Christ, who has of His own free will taken our burdens upon Himself. To let Him bear our burdens and not thank Him through a changed life of repentance and discipleship would be to reject Him and His gift of grace. Thus, when He takes our sins upon Himself, justice is satisfied. It has been paid by the Savior.

If we in humility receive the Atonement in the manner God has prescribed, using the priesthood of God found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the authoritative channel through which the Atonement is effective, then all that God has for us is open to us. We may dwell with the Father in the celestial kingdom, clothed in the perfection of Jesus Christ, and thus become more and more like our Savior.

If, however, we choose not to receive the Atonement through the channels God has given, if we stand pridefully before God asserting that we know better than He how to gain His presence, we will not receive the full effects of the Atonement.
As stated earlier, all thinking Christians believe that we receive the Atonement through faith and repentance, but because Latter-day Saints hold that the ordinances of the gospel—administered by the authoritative priesthood—are essential channels of grace that all must experience, we proclaim the “more” of Mormonism to all persons, Christian and non-Christian alike. To reject the saving ordinances of the gospel is to reject Christ, at least in part, and thus His Atonement is not fully effective. We must pay, at least partially, for our own sins, and we can never do enough works to atone for our sins.

Justice is satisfied, if we wish to suffer for our sins, but since we can never remove them through works—even works coupled with faith and repentance, since God asked us to participate in saving ordinances—a fulness of joy is not open to us. We may dwell with Christ and the Holy Ghost in the terrestrial kingdom, or we may dwell with the Holy Ghost in the telestial kingdom, but the fulness of joy to be found in the presence of all three members of the Godhead in the celestial kingdom is closed to those whose pride prevents them from coming to the Father in the manner He has prescribed (see figure 2).
Conclusion

Living a mortal life, subject to both spiritual and temporal death, has eternally been part of the plan of salvation for all human beings. But mortality can be forced on no one, since to do so would violate the eternal nature of agency. Thus, Adam and Eve had to choose to become mortal, as did all human beings. They chose to leave the perfection and security of the Garden of Eden by transcending its limits through eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Through this act, they and their descendants became subject to temporal death and to spiritual death. Both of these effects are removed unconditionally by the Atonement of Jesus Christ through His Resurrection and through the redemption that He wrought, both of which bring all into the presence of the Father for judgment through Christ.

Personal sins are also removed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ if we are willing to accept it by utilizing the channels of grace offered by the Father: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins under the hands of one holding the authority of the priesthood, reception of the Holy Ghost, and enduring in faith in Christ through discipleship and through participating in the sublime ordinances of the temple, which bring us most nearly to Christ.

Notes

4. There is a polite debate among Latter-day Saints as to whether intelligence in a generic way is eternal and becomes personal only at the time that the Father clothes intelligences with spirit bodies or whether individual intelligences are eternal and are individually clothed with spirit bodies. I believe the latter to be correct, for it better answers the question of the origin of evil, laying it clearly on the doorstep of individuals. God is not the author of evil but rather eternal individuals are. Truman G. Madsen states, “Your autobiographical thread leads backward through the lineage of Deity and on to the original individual unit called ‘intelligence.’ In it, in miniature, is the acorn of your potential oak, the unsculptured image of a glorified personality” (*Eternal Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970], 17).
5. This view of the eternal nature of matter and energy is in harmony with
the laws of conservation of matter and energy, which can neither be created nor destroyed. It also is in harmony with Einstein’s theory of the relationship between matter and energy expressed in his famous equation \( E=mc^2 \). Joseph Smith stated, “Anything created cannot be eternal; and earth, water, etc., had their existence in an elementary state, from eternity” (*History of the Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978], 3:387).


7. There are four basic accounts of the creation: Genesis, Moses, Abraham, and the one given in the temple. In what follows we will essentially follow the Moses account, recognizing, however, that further information given by the Spirit in the temple cannot be explicitly stated but lies behind what is said here.


10. Although persons who are not Christian but still try to serve God as He has made Himself known to them can have the tension between good and evil in their lives, they generally hold that they can bridge the gap between themselves and God through repentance. Christians of all traditions believe this is inadequate because they know Christ and thus know that there is a savior for them.

11. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), section 1259, p. 352: “For catechumens who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.”

New Publications

*A Mormon Bibliography, 1830–1930
Second Edition, Revised Enlarged
By Chad J. Flake and Larry W. Draper*

Imagine being able to locate every significant work on Mormonism ever published in the first hundred years of the Church’s existence. Readers will find a historian’s treasure trove in this remarkable two-volume reference work. The 2004 edition has been enlarged to include more than twenty-seven hundred additional entries that were either intentionally left out of the original edition or Ten Year Supplement or that were discovered since 1989. Consequently, this edition includes more than 14,400 total entries.

New entries include relevant state and county histories that contain descriptions of the Mormon presence in those localities. Also added are more than six hundred published U.S. government documents that deal with proposed bills, passed legislation, territorial laws, and court cases relating to the Mormons.

The 2004 edition also includes three indexes created to fill several important needs. The title index is especially useful when searching for
books without a stated author. This is particularly true of the entries produced by the Church. Also included are indexes to materials by date (chronological) and foreign language.

Available at Latter-day Saint bookstores, two-volume set, $149.95, 8 ½ by 11 inches.

A Book of Mormon Treasury

“The Book of Mormon provides resounding and great answers to what Amulek designated as ‘the great question’—namely, is there really a redeeming Christ? (Alma 34:5–6). The Book of Mormon with clarity and with evidence says, ‘Yes! Yes! Yes!’”

This declaration by Elder Neal A. Maxwell is the first in what might be described as a treasure trove of answers—a collection of twenty-seven thought-provoking essays exploring and explaining the nuggets of truth found in the Book of Mormon.

A Book of Mormon Treasury offers powerful doctrines, insights, and applications taught by General Authorities and religious educators at Brigham Young University. Some of the many featured authors include Elders Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, and Jeffrey R. Holland. This timely volume covers a wide variety of topics, including “Agency and Freedom,” “The Natural Man: An Enemy to God,” and “The Jaredites: A Case Study in Following the Brethren.”

Available in Latter-day Saint bookstores, $27.95, 6 by 9 inches, 485 pages.

The Fulness of the Gospel:
Foundational Teachings from the Book of Mormon

The Prophet Joseph Smith states that “the Book of Mormon was . . . the keystone of our religion.” The contributors to the 32nd annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium have taken the Prophet’s statement to heart, offering nineteen chapters that focus on foundational doctrines in the Book of Mormon.
One of the authors, David Brent Marsh, writes of our time, “As war and violence draw closer to our nations, cities, and homes, disciples of Christ yearn for a sense of peace and safety. The Book of Mormon was brought forth in these latter days to provide inspired instruction and hope for disciples of Christ who live during times of war.”

As we focus our study on the fundamental teachings of the gospel that are found in the Book of Mormon, we can make its teachings the keystone of our own personal lives.

Available in Latter-day Saint bookstores, $25.95, 6 by 9 inches, 293 pages.

Religious Studies Center

Established in 1975 by BYU Religious Education Dean Jeffrey R. Holland, the Religious Studies Center (RSC) is the research arm of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. Since its inception, it has provided funding for numerous projects, including conferences, books, and articles relating to Latter-day Saint culture, history, scripture, and doctrine. The RSC endeavors to use its resources to, first, facilitate excellence in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; second, encourage research and publication that contribute to the mission of the university and its sponsoring institution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and third, promote study and understanding of other cultures and religions.

Research and Publication

One of the primary aspects of the RSC’s mission is to promote the search for new truths and the quest to better understand well-known
truths. The ultimate interpretation of doctrinal matters rests with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; therefore, we seek to discover historical background, provide cultural and linguistic details, and explore new avenues of understanding into our faith, history, and way of life. Thus, research into scripture, Church history, and religious matters in general is an important part of what the full-time Religious Education faculty do. Because BYU is primarily a teaching institution, we recognize as our major thrust the classroom experience. We seek, however, to expand our classroom through the writing and publication of our research.

The RSC helps fund several meaningful projects each year and publishes books, articles, a newsletter, and the Religious Educator in helping to promote and disseminate Latter-day Saint research and thought. These publications enhance the libraries of Latter-day Saint readers and others who take an interest in the history or culture of the Latter-day Saints.

An Invitation to Join with Us

RSC research and publication projects are sustained by university funding and by financial donations from friends who want to encourage the kind of quality work the RSC does. We are thankful for the generosity of those who support our efforts to bring the best scholarship to light. If you would like to become a donor to the RSC to help its mission, please contact the RSC at 370 JSB, BYU, Provo, UT 84602.

The RSC restricts its publications to items that fit within the scholarly range of the curriculum and mission of Religious Education. It produces materials that are well written, rigorous, and original and that reflect the doctrine, the history, the teachings of the living prophets, and the standard works of the Restoration. It seeks works that meet academic needs or fill a niche in the area of faithful scholarship. It welcomes all materials that fit within these parameters.
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The One Pure Defense
President Boyd K. Packer

“A Miracle from Day One”: Publication of the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts
Rebecca L. McConkie

A Light in the Wilderness: Robert J. Matthews and His Work on the Joseph Smith Translation
Ray L. Huntington and Brian M. Hauglid

A Community of Christ Perspective on the JST Research of Robert J. Matthews: An Interview with Ronald E. Romig
Brian M. Hauglid and Ray L. Huntington

Precious Truths Restored: Joseph Smith Translation Changes Not Included in Our Bible
W. Jeffrey Marsh and Thomas E. Sherry

“The Best Two Years of Our Lives”: A CES Mission Remembered
Ed and Bunkie Griffith

Endowed with Power
Steven C. Harper

Teaching the Fall and the Atonement: A Comparative Method
Roger R. Keller

The Joseph Smith Translation
“The Best Two Years of Our Lives”
Teaching the Fall and the Atonement

“Spiritual diseases of epidemic proportion sweep over the world. We are not able to curb them. But we can prevent our youth from being infected by them.”

President Boyd K. Packer