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The Eternal Nature of the Church, the Priesthood, and Man

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Abstract: Eternal Nature of Plan of Salvation—Gospel Principles are Eternal—Pre-existing States—Spirit Memories—The Immortality of Man—Man Eternally Responsible—Our Indestructible, Immortal Identity—No New Principles in the Gospel—Fountain of Truth—Eternity of the Spirit of man—Purposes of Almighty Unchangeable

CHAPTER II

The Eternal Nature of the Church, the Priesthood, and Man

ETERNAL NATURE OF PLAN OF SALVATION. I feel this morning as I have felt all my life, but I feel it stronger this morning, perhaps, than ever before, that there is nothing under the heavens of so much importance to me or to the children of men as the great plan of life and salvation, which was devised in the heavens in the beginning, and which has been handed down from period to period through the inspiration of holy men called of God until the day of the coming of the Son of Man, for this gospel and this plan of salvation was revealed to our first parents. The angel of God carried to them the plan of redemption, and of salvation from death and sin that has been revealed from time to time by divine authority to the children of men, and it has undergone no change. There was nothing in it, in the beginning, that was superfluous or unnecessary; nothing in it that could be dispensed with; it was a complete plan devised in the beginning by the wisdom of the Father and the holy ones for the redemption of the human race and for their salvation and exaltation in the presence of God. It was taught more fully, and exemplified more perfectly in the being, the life and mission, the instruction and doctrine, of the Son of God, than ever before, unless there may be an exception in the days of Enoch; but through all the generations of time, the same gospel, the same plan of life and salvation, the same ordinances, burial with Christ, remembrance of the great sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the world and for man's redemption, have been handed down from time to time, from the time of the creation.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1913, p. 2.

GOSPEL PRINCIPLES ARE ETERNAL. Faith in God is an irrevocable principle, just as much as "thou shalt not kill;" "thou shalt not steal;" "thou shalt not commit adultery." Repentance of a sin is an eternal principle, and is as essential in its place, and is as much an integral part of the gospel of Jesus Christ as: "Thou shalt not kill," or, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Baptism for the remission of sin, by one having authority, is an eternal principle, for God devised it, and commanded it, and Christ himself was not above obeying it; he had to obey it in order to fulfil the law of righteousness.

And then the rites of the Priesthood of the Church, as the Lord has revealed them, and the principles that underlie the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, are irrevocable, unchanging and unchangeable. We talk of the "everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ," which "is the power of God unto salvation," and these principles in and of themselves are eternal principles, and will last while life, or thought, or being lasts, or immortality endures.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1912, p. 11.

PRE-EXISTING STATES.

Mrs. Martha H. Tingey,

President, Y. L. M. I. A.

DEAR SISTER: The First Presidency have nothing to advance concerning pre-existing states but that which is contained in the revelations to the Church. The written standards of scripture show that all people who come to this earth and are born in mortality had a pre-existent, spiritual personality as the sons or daughters of the Eternal Father. (See *Pearl of Great Price*, chap 3, verses 5-7). Jesus Christ was the Firstborn. A spirit born of God is an immortal being. When the body dies the spirit does not die. In the resurrected state the body will be immortal as well as the spirit. Speculations as to the career of Adam before he

came to the earth are of no real value. We learn by revelation that he was Michael, the Archangel, and that he stands at the head of his posterity on earth (*Doctrine and Covenants*, sec. 107:53-56). Dogmatic assertions do not take the place of revelation, and we should be satisfied with that which is accepted as doctrine, and not discuss matters that, after all disputes, are merely matters of theory.

Your brethren,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
 ANTHON H. LUND,
 CHARLES W. PENROSE,
 First Presidency.

—*Young Woman's Journal*, Vol. 23, pp 162, 163, 1912.

SPIRIT MEMORIES. (Letter written to Elder O. F. Whitney who was a missionary in England.) I heartily endorse your sentiments respecting congeniality of spirits. Our knowledge of persons and things before we came here, combined with the divinity awakened within our souls through obedience to the gospel, powerfully affects, in my opinion, all our likes and dislikes, and guides our preferences in the course of this life, provided we give careful heed to the admonitions of the Spirit.

All those salient truths which come home so forcibly to the head and heart seem but the awakening of the memories of the spirit. Can we know anything here that we did not know before we came? Are not the means of knowledge in the first estate equal to those of this? I think that the spirit, before and after this probation, possesses greater facilities, aye, manifold greater, for the acquisition of knowledge, than while manacled and shut up in the prison-house of mortality.

Had we not known before we came the necessity of our coming, the importance of obtaining tabernacles, the glory to be achieved in posterity, the grand object to be at-

tained by being tried and tested—weighed in the balance, in the exercise of the divine attributes, god-like powers and free agency with which we are endowed; whereby, after descending below all things, Christ-like, we might ascend above all things, and become like our Father, Mother and Elder Brother, Almighty and Eternal!—we never would have come; that is, if we could have stayed away.

I believe that our Savior is the ever-living example to all flesh in all these things. He no doubt possessed a foreknowledge of all the vicissitudes through which he would have to pass in the mortal tabernacle, when the foundations of this earth were laid, “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” When he conversed with the brother of Jared, on the Mount, in his spiritual body, he understood his mission, and knew the work he had to do, as thoroughly as when he ascended from the Mount of Olives before the wondering gaze of the Jewish disciples, with his resurrected, glorious and immortal body.

And yet, to accomplish the ultimatum of his previous existence, and consummate the grand and glorious object of his being, and the salvation of his infinite brotherhood, he had to come and take upon him flesh. He is our example. The works he did, we are commanded to do. We are enjoined to follow him, as he followed his Head; that where he is, we may be also; and being with him, may be like him. If Christ knew beforehand, so did we. But in coming here, we forgot all, that our agency might be free indeed, to choose good or evil, that we might merit the reward of our own choice and conduct. But by the power of the Spirit, in the redemption of Christ, through obedience, we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home.—*Contributor*, Vol. 4, pp. 114, 115, 1883.

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN. We are called mortal be-

ings because in us are seeds of death, but in reality we are immortal beings because there is also within us the germ of eternal life. Man is a dual being, composed of the spirit which gives life, force, intelligence and capacity to man, and the body which is the tenement of the spirit and is suited to its form, adapted to its necessities, and acts in harmony with it, and to its utmost capacity yields obedience to the will of the spirit. The two combined constitute the soul. The body is dependent upon the spirit, and the spirit during its natural occupancy of the body is subject to the laws which apply to and govern it in the mortal state. In this natural body are the seeds of weakness and decay, which, when fully ripened or untimely plucked up, in the language of scripture, is called "the temporal death." The spirit is also subject to what is termed in the scriptures and revelations from God, "spiritual death." The same as that which befell our first parents, when, through disobedience and transgression, they became subject to the will of Satan, and were thrust out from the presence of the Lord and became spiritually dead, which the Lord says, "is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say, Depart, ye cursed!" And the Lord further says, "But, behold I say unto you, that I 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 (from the first death), through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son. And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation; that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe; and they that believe not, unto eternal damnation, for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not." From the natural death, that is the death of the body, and

also from the first death, "which is spiritual," there is redemption through belief on the name of the Only Begotten Son, in connection with repentance and obedience to the ordinances of the gospel, declared by holy angels, for if one "believe," he must also obey; but from the "second death," even that same death which is the first death, "which is spiritual," and from which man may be redeemed through faith and obedience, and which will again be pronounced upon the wicked when God shall say, "depart, ye cursed," there is no redemption, so far as light on this matter has been revealed.

It is written that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men" who receive me and repent; "but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven unto men." If men will not repent and come unto Christ, through the ordinances of his gospel, they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, but must remain forever subject to the will of Satan and the consequent spiritual darkness or death unto which our first parents fell, subjecting all their posterity thereto, and from which none can be redeemed but by belief or faith on the name of the Only Begotten Son and obedience to the laws of God. But, thanks be to the eternal Father, through the merciful provisions of the gospel, all mankind will have the opportunity of escape, or deliverance, from this spiritual death, either in time or in eternity, for not until they are freed from the first can they become subject unto the second death, still if they repent not "they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall," and will continue subject to the will of Satan, the first spiritual death, so long as "they repent not, and thereby reject Christ and his gospel;" but what of those who do believe, repent of their sins, obey the gospel, enter into its covenants, receive the keys of the priesthood and the knowledge of the truth by revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards turn away wholly from that light and knowledge? They "become

a law unto themselves," and "will to abide in sin;" of such it is written, "whoso breaketh this covenant, after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come." And again, "Thus saith the Lord, concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves, through the power of the devil, to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—they are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born, for they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come, having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father—having crucified him unto themselves, and put him to an open shame."—Doc. and Cov. 76:31-35.

Now, there is a difference between this class and those who simply repent not and reject the gospel in the flesh. Of these latter it is written, "they shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb," and "shall be redeemed in the due time of the Lord after the sufferings of his wrath." But of the others it is said, "they shall not be redeemed," for "they are the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power." The others, never having been redeemed from the first, cannot be doomed to the second death, or in other words, cannot be made to suffer eternally the wrath of God, without hope of redemption through repentance, but must continue to suffer the first death until they repent, and are redeemed therefrom through the power of the atonement and the gospel of salvation, thereby being brought to the possession of all the keys and blessings to which they will be capable of attaining or to which they may be entitled, through the mercy, justice and power of the everlasting God; or, on the other

hand, forever remain bound in the chains of spiritual darkness, bondage and banishment from his presence, kingdom and glory. The "temporal death" is one thing, and the "spiritual death" is another thing. The body may be dissolved and become extinct as an organism, although the elements of which it is composed are indestructible or eternal, but I hold it as self-evident that the spiritual organism is an eternal, immortal being, destined to enjoy eternal happiness and a fulness of joy, or suffer the wrath of God, and misery—a just condemnation, eternally. Adam became spiritually dead, yet he lived to endure it until freed therefrom by the power of the atonement, through repentance, etc. Those upon whom the second death shall fall will live to suffer and endure it, but without hope of redemption. The death of the body, or natural death, is but a temporary circumstance to which all were subjected through the fall, and from which all will be restored or resurrected by the power of God, through the atonement of Christ.

Man existed before he came to this earth, and he will exist after he passes from it; and will continue to live throughout the countless ages of eternity.

There are three classes of beings; or rather, man exists in three separate conditions, before and after his probation upon this earth—first, in the spirit or pre-existent state; second, in the disembodied state, the condition which exists after the dissolution of the body and spirit until the resurrection take place; and third, in the resurrected state. For instance, some fourteen hundred years before the coming of Christ into the world to sojourn in the flesh, he showed himself to the brother of Jared and said, "Behold this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit, and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit, will I appear unto my people in the flesh." He further declared, "Behold I am he who

was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold I am Jesus Christ."

Here Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body, even as he showed himself unto the Nephites—that is, prior to his coming in the flesh. This I consider typical of the first condition of all spirits. Again it is written, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison: which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," etc. Thus we see that while the body of our Savior slept in the tomb, he went in the spirit, and preached his glorious gospel to "the spirits in prison," who were disobedient in the days of Noah, and were destroyed in the flesh by the flood. This was their second condition or state in the spirit, awaiting the resurrection of their bodies which were slumbering in death. "Marvel not at this:" saith Jesus, "for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [the Redeemer's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." In reference to the third condition or state, we will refer to the account given of the risen Redeemer before his ascension. John tells us that he appeared unto his disciples three times after his resurrection, on which occasions he ate bread, broiled fish and honeycomb, and opened the eyes of their understanding, that they began to comprehend the Scriptures and the prophecies concerning Christ. But when he appeared unto them they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, "Why

are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Here is presented the true type of the resurrected being. And after this manner are all those who have their resurrected bodies, and there are many of these, for we are told in the scriptures that "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." This class of beings dwell in heaven, or in the paradise of the just, having been counted worthy to come forth in the first resurrection, even with Christ, to dwell with him and to be associated with the members of the kingdom of God and his Christ. These comprise the three conditions or estates of man in heaven. Not all, however, of the disembodied spirits enjoy the same privileges, exaltation and glory. The spirits of the wicked, disobedient, and unbelieving, are denied the privileges, joy and glory of the spirits of the just and good. The bodies of the Saints will come forth in the first resurrection, and those of the unbelieving, etc., in the second, or last. In other words, the Saints will rise first, and those who are not Saints will not rise until afterwards, according to the wisdom, justice and mercy of God.

Christ is the great example for all mankind, and I believe that mankind were as much foreordained to become like him, as that he was foreordained to be the Redeemer of man. "Whom God did foreknow"—and whom did he not foreknow?—"he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." It is very plain that mankind are very far from being like Christ, as the world is today, only in form of person. In this we are like him, or in the form of his person, as he is the express image of his Father's person. We are therefore in the form of God, physically, and may

become like him spiritually, and like him in the possession of knowledge, intelligence, wisdom and power.

The grand object of our coming to this earth is that we may become like Christ, for if we are not like him, we cannot become the sons of God, and be joint heirs with Christ.

The man who passes through this probation, and is faithful, being redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ, through the ordinances of the gospel, and attains to exaltation in the kingdom of God, is not less but greater than the angels, and if you doubt it, read your Bible, for there it is written that the Saints shall "judge angels," and also they shall "judge the world." And why? Because the resurrected, righteous man has progressed beyond the pre-existent or disembodied spirits, and has risen above them, having both spirit and body as Christ has, having gained the victory over death and the grave, and having power over sin and Satan; in fact, having passed from the condition of the angels to that of a God. He possesses keys of power, dominion and glory that the angel does not possess—and cannot possess without gaining them in the same way that he gained them, which will be by passing through the same ordeals and proving equally faithful. It was so ordained when the morning stars sang together, before the foundations of this earth were laid. Man in his pre-existent condition is not perfect, neither is he in the disembodied estate. There is no perfect estate but that of the risen Redeemer, which is God's estate, and no man can become perfect except he become like the Gods. And what are they like? I have shown what Christ is like, and he is like his Father, but I will refer to an undoubted authority to this people, on this point: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also: but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us." (Doc.

and Cov. Sec. 130.) There is not time to refer to the many scriptural passages which might be cited in proof of these important facts, enough already have been referred to, to place the matter beyond a doubt.

It is believed by many in the Christian world, that our Savior finished his mission when he expired upon the cross, and his last words on the cross, as given by the Apostle John—"it is finished," are frequently quoted as evidence of the fact; but this is an error. Christ did not complete his mission upon the earth until after his body was raised from the dead. Had his mission been completed when he died, his disciples would have continued fishermen, carpenters, etc., for they returned to their several occupations soon after the crucifixion, not yet knowing the force of their holy calling, nor understanding the mission assigned them by their Master, whose name would soon have been buried with his body in the grave to perish and be forgotten, "for as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." But the most glorious part of his mission had to be accomplished after the crucifixion and death of his body. When on the first day of the week some of the disciples went to the tomb with certain preparations for the body of their Lord, they were met there by two men clothed in "shining garments," who said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And not until then did the disciples remember these words of the Savior, or begin to understand their meaning. Why were they thus forgetful, and seemingly ignorant of all they had been taught by the Savior respecting the objects of his mission to the earth? Because they lacked one important qualification, they had not yet been "endowed with power from on high." They had not yet obtained the gift of the

Holy Ghost. And the presumption is, they never would have received this important and essential endowment had Christ's mission been completed at the time of his death.

It may seem strange to some who may not have reflected on this matter fully, that the disciples of Christ were without the gift of the Holy Ghost until after his resurrection. But so it is written, notwithstanding the Savior on one occasion declared, "blessed art thou, Simon, etc., for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." While Jesus was with them he was their light and their inspiration. They followed him by sight, and felt the majestic power of his presence, and when these were gone they returned to their nets and to their various occupations and to their homes saying, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, but the chief priests and our rulers have delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." No wonder that Jesus exclaimed unto some of them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

If the disciples had been endowed with the "gift of the Holy Ghost," or "with power from on high," at this time, their course would have been altogether different from this, as the sequel abundantly proved. If Peter, who was the chief apostle, had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the power and testimony thereof prior to the terrible night on which he cursed and swore and denied his Lord, the result would have been very different with him, for then he would have sinned against "light and knowledge," and "against the Holy Ghost," for which there is no forgiveness. The fact, therefore, that he was forgiven, after bitter tears of repentance, is an evidence that he was without the witness of the Holy Ghost, never having received it. The other disciples or apostles of Christ were precisely in the same condition, and it was not until the evening of the day on which Jesus came out of the grave that he bestowed upon

them this inestimable gift. John gives a careful description of this important event which concludes as follows: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," etc. This was their glorious commission, and now were they prepared to receive the witness of the Spirit—even the testimony of Jesus Christ. Yet they were told to "tarry in Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high," which they did. Jesus further told them that if he went not away the "Comforter"—that is, the Holy Ghost—would not come unto them, but if he went away he would "send him," and he it was who should testify of Christ, and of the Father, and bring to their remembrance "all things whatsoever" he had commanded or taught them, and it should "lead them into all truth." Thus we see that the resurrection from the dead, not only of Christ, but of all mankind, in the due time of the Lord, the endowment of the apostles with the Holy Ghost, and their glorious commission from Christ, being sent out by him as he was sent by the Father; the opening of the eyes of the disciples to understand the prophecies of the Scriptures, and many other things did Jesus after he cried out upon the cross, "it is finished." Further, the mission of Jesus will be unfinished until he redeems the whole human family, except the sons of perdition, and also this earth from the curse that is upon it, and both the earth and its inhabitants can be presented to the Father redeemed, sanctified and glorious.

Things upon the earth, so far as they have not been perverted by wickedness, are typical of things in heaven. Heaven was the prototype of this beautiful creation when it came from the hand of the Creator, and was pronounced "good."—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 23 (1883), pp. 169-175, delivered June 18, 1882.

MAN ETERNALLY RESPONSIBLE. Man will be held responsible in the life to come for the deeds that he has done in this life, and will have to answer for the stewardships entrusted to his care here, before the Judge of the quick and the dead, the Father of our spirits, and of our Lord and Master. This is in the design of God, a part of his great purpose. We are not here to live a few months or years, to eat, drink and sleep, then to die, pass away and perish. The Lord Almighty never designed man to be so ephemeral, useless and imperfect as this. I would pity the being who had such a conception as this of the Creator of the starry heavens, the planets, and the world on which we dwell, poor as it is in glory in comparison to the many others created. Is it conceivable that one possessing such power, majesty, intelligence, light and knowledge would create a world like this and people it with beings in his own image and likeness only to live and grovel through a short, miserable existence, then die and perish? No such thing! There is no death here, but there is life!

God is the God of the living, and not of the dead. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the ancient prophets. They live! They live not only in the words they spoke, the predictions they made, and in the promises handed down from generation to generation to the children of men; they live not only in the record they made, in the doctrines that they taught, and in the hope that they held out for redemption, atonement and salvation, but they live in spirit, in entity, as they lived here. They are prophets, as they were prophets here, the chosen of God; patriarchs, as they were here; possessing the same identity, the same entity; and by and by, if not already, they will possess the same bodies they possessed while journeying in mortality. Those bodies will become purified, cleansed, and made perfect; and the spirit and the body will be reunited, never more to be separated, never again to taste of death. This is the law

and the promise of God, and the words spoken to his ancient prophets, come down to us through the generations that have followed.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, p. 357, Feb., 1918.

OUR INDESTRUCTIBLE, IMMORTAL IDENTITY. What a glorious thing it is to know and be true to that which has been revealed in these latter times through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was revealed anciently by the Savior himself, and he exemplified that glorious principle of which I wish to say a few words, and which has been renewed and emphasized more especially in these latter days through Joseph Smith—I refer to our identity, our indestructible, immortal identity. As in Christ we have the example, he was born of woman, he lived, he died, and he lived again in his own person and being, bearing even the marks of the wounds in his flesh, after his resurrection from the dead—so also a testimony has been given to you, in later days, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and others who have been blessed with knowledge, that the same individual Being still lives and will always live. Jesus is possessed of immortality, and eternal life; and in evidence of his existence and his immortality, and in evidence of the great and glorious truths of the gospel which he taught, the death which he died, and the resurrection that he wrought from the dead, he has revealed himself and borne his own record and testimony to those who have lived and still live in this day and age. What a glorious thought it is, to me at least, and it must be to all who have conceived of the truth or received it in their hearts, that those from whom we have to part here, we will meet again and see as they are. We will meet the same identical being that we associated with here in the flesh—not some other soul, some other being, or the same being in some other form, but the same identity and the same form and likeness, the same person we knew and were associated with in our mortal existence, even to the

wounds in the flesh. Not that a person will always be marred by scars, wounds, deformities, defects or infirmities, for these will be removed in their course, in their proper time, according to the merciful providence of God. Deformity will be removed; defects will be eliminated, and men and women shall attain to the perfection of their spirits, to the perfection that God designed in the beginning. It is his purpose that men and women, his children, born to become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, shall be made perfect, physically as well as spiritually, through obedience to the law by which he has provided the means that perfection shall come to all his children. Therefore, I look for the time when our dear Brother William C. Staines, whom we all knew so well, and with whom we were familiar for years—I was familiar with him, all my life, just as I was familiar with Aunt Rachel here all my life, and do not remember the time when I did not know her—I look for the time, I say, when Brother Staines will be restored. He will not remain the crippled and deformed William C. Staines that we knew, but he will be restored to his perfect frame—every limb, every joint, every part of his physical being will be restored to its perfect frame. This is the law and the word of God to us, as it is contained in the revelations that have come to us, through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The point in my mind which I desire to speak of particularly is this: When we shall have the privilege to meet our mother, our aunt, our sister, this noble woman whose mortal remains lie here now, but whose immortal spirit has ascended to God from whence it came, when that spirit shall return to take up this tabernacle again, she will be Aunt Rachel in her perfection. She will not always remain just as she will appear when she is restored again to life, but she will go on to perfection. Under that law of restoration that God has provided, she will regain her perfection, the perfection of her youth, the perfection of her glory and of her

being, until her resurrected body shall assume the exact stature of the spirit that possessed it here in its perfection, and thus we shall see the glorified, redeemed, exalted, perfected Aunt Rachel, mother, sister, saint and daughter of the living God, her identity being unchanged, as a child may grow to manhood or womanhood and still be the same being.

I want to say to my friends, my brethren and sisters, and to the kindred, that the Lord Almighty has revealed these truths to us in these days. We not only have it in the written word, we have it in the testimony of the Spirit of God in the heart of every soul who has drunk from the fountain of truth and light, and that witness bears record of these words to us. What else would satisfy us? What else would satisfy the desire of the immortal soul? Would we be satisfied to be imperfect? Would we be satisfied to be decrepit? Would we be satisfied to remain forever and ever in the form of infirmity incident to age? No! Would we be satisfied to see the children we bury in their infancy remain as children only, throughout the countless ages of eternity? No! Neither would the spirit that did possess the tabernacles of our children be satisfied to remain in that condition. But we know our children will not be compelled to remain a child in stature always, for it was revealed from God, the fountain of truth, through Joseph Smith the prophet, in this dispensation, that in the resurrection of the dead the child that was buried in its infancy will come up in the form of the child that it was when it was laid down, then it will begin to develop. From the day of the resurrection, the body will develop until it reaches the full measure of the stature of its spirit, whether it be male or female. If the spirit possessed the intelligence of God and the aspirations of mortal souls, it could not be satisfied with anything less than this. You will remember we are told that the spirit of Jesus Christ visited one of the ancient

prophets, and revealed himself to him, and he declared his identity, that he was the same Son of God that was to come in the meridian of time. He said he would appear in the flesh just as he appeared to that prophet. He was not an infant; he was a grown, developed spirit; possessing the form of man and the form of God, the same form as when he came and took upon him a tabernacle and developed it to the full stature of his spirit. These are truths that have been revealed to us. What for? To give us intelligent hope; to give us intelligent aspiration; to lead us to think, to hope, to labor and accomplish what God has aimed and does aim and design that we should accomplish, not only in this life, but in the life to come.

I rejoice exceedingly that I know and have known nearly all my life such a noble woman. I do not remember the first time that I saw Aunt Rachel, I can't recall it; it seems to me I always knew her, just as I knew my mother in my childhood and all the way through life; and I rejoice exceedingly in this testimony of the Spirit of the Lord that has come to us through revelation in the latter days. Through this testimony I am confident that I shall see Aunt Rachel, by and by; and when I go—and I expect to go, perhaps, long before she shall recover this tabernacle—I expect to meet her there. I expect to meet the same individual that I knew here. I expect to be able to recognize her just as I could recognize her tomorrow, if she were living. I believe I will know just exactly who she is and what she is, and I will remember all I knew about her; and enjoy her association in the spirit as I did in the flesh; because her identity is fixed and indestructible, just as fixed and indestructible as the identity of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. They cannot be any other than themselves. They cannot be changed; they are from everlasting to everlasting, eternally the same; so it will be with us. We will progress and develop and grow in wisdom and understanding, but our

identity can never change. We did not spring from spawn. Our spirits existed from the beginning, have existed always, and will continue forever. We did not pass through the ordeals of embodiment in the lesser animals in order to reach the perfection to which we have attained in manhood and womanhood, in the image and likeness of God. God was and is our Father, and his children were begotten in the flesh in his own image and likeness, male and female. There may have been times when they did not possess the same intelligence that they possessed at other times. There are periods in the history of the world when men have dwindled into ignorance and barbarism, and then there were other times when they have grown in intelligence, developed in understanding, enlarged in spirit and comprehension, approaching nearer to the condition and likeness of their Father and God, and then losing faith, losing the love of God, losing the light of the Spirit and returning again to semi-barbarism. Then again, they have been restored, by the power and operation of the Spirit of the Lord upon their minds, until they again reached a degree of intelligence. We have reached a degree of intelligence, in our dispensation. Will this same degree of intelligence, that now exists throughout the world, continue to exist? Yes; if the world continue to abide in the light that has been shed abroad in the world by the Father of light, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. But let them deny God, let them deny truth, let them depart from righteousness, let them begin again to wallow in wickedness and transgression of the laws of God, and what will be the result? They will degenerate; they will again recede possibly into absolute barbarism, unless they repent, and the power of God will be again restored to them and they be again lifted up by that light which shines and is never dim, except to men who shut their hearts and eyes and ears against it and will not receive it.

I did not expect to enter into any lengthy discourse. I thank God for my relationship and acquaintance with this noble, good mother. I expect to be associated with her throughout all the ages to come, if I can be as faithful as she has been. I desire to be, and that isn't all—with the help of God, I intend to be faithful, as she has been faithful, that in the end I may be worthy to dwell where she will dwell, with the Prophet Joseph Smith, with her husband with whom she was associated here in the flesh, with her son and her children, from generation to generation. I expect to be associated with them in the mansions that are prepared for the righteous, where God and Christ are, where those shall be who believe in his name, who receive his work and abide in his law. Oh! that I could be instrumental in the hands of the Lord in bringing every loved soul unto him, for there are souls that are still lacking, whom I love, and if it were possible, how I would love to be instrumental in the hand of the Lord in bringing those loved souls to a knowledge of this truth, that they might receive of its glory, benefits and blessings in this life and in the life to come. From my childhood, I have always tried to be a savior on Mount Zion, a savior among men. I have that desire in my heart. I may not have been very successful in my ambition to accomplish this work, but I have desired it, and I still desire that I may be instrumental in helping to spread this truth to the earth's remotest bounds and the testimony of it to the children of men in every land. I know it is true. It appeals to my judgment, to my desires; and to the aspirations of my soul. I want my family; I want those the Lord has given to me; I want them now; I want them forever! I want to be associated with them forever. I do not want them to change their identity. I do not want them to be somebody else. This idea of theosophy, that is gaining ground even among so-called Christians, in these latter days, is a fallacy of the deepest kind. It is absolutely repugnant

to the very soul of man to think that a civilized, intelligent being might become a dog, a cow, a cat; that he might be transformed into another shape, another kind of being. It is absolutely repulsive, and so opposed to the great truth of God, that has been revealed from the beginning, that he is from the beginning always the same, that he cannot change, and that his children cannot change. They may change from worse to better; they may change from evil to good, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from humanity to immortality, from death to life everlasting. They may progress in the manner in which God has progressed; they may grow and advance, but their identity can never be changed, worlds without end—remember that, God has revealed these principles, and I know they are true. They assert their truth upon the intelligent mind and soul of man. They embrace or embody that which the Lord has planted in our hearts and souls to desire, and to give it unto us. They put us in the way of receiving that which we most desire and most love, that which is most necessary and essential to our happiness and exaltation. They take of the things of God and give them to us, and they prepare us for the future, for exaltation and for eternal happiness, a reward which all the souls in the world desire, if they are correct in their lives and thoughts. It is only the vicious and the truly wicked who do not desire purity; they do not love purity and truth. I do not know whether it is possible for any soul to become so debased as to lose all regard for that which is pure and chaste, good and true and godlike. I believe that there still lingers in the heart of the most vicious and wicked, at times at least, a spark of that divinity that has been planted in the souls of all the sons of God. Men may become so corrupt that they do not have more than mere glimpses of that divine inspiration that strives to lead them toward and to love good; but I do not believe there is a soul in the world that has absolutely lost all conception

and admiration of that which is good and pure, when he sees it. It is hard to believe that a human being may become so depraved that he has lost all desire that he might also be good and pure, if it were possible; but many people have abandoned themselves to evil and have come to the conclusion that there is no chance for them. While there is life there is hope, and while there is repentance there is a chance for forgiveness; and if there is forgiveness, there is a chance for growth and development until we acquire the full knowledge of these principles that will exalt and save us and prepare us to enter into the presence of God the Father, who is the Father of our spirits, and who is the Father, in the flesh, of his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who joined divine immortality with the mortal, welded the link between God and man, and made it possible for mortal souls, on whom the sentence of death had been placed, to acquire eternal life, through obedience to his laws. Let us, therefore, seek for the truth and walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that we may have fellowship with him, and with each other, that his blood may cleanse us from all sin.

May the Lord comfort my brother Heber, and I know he will. Brother Heber does not feel that there is any death here. I don't think I could weep for sorrow. I could give way to tears just now, but they would not be tears of sorrow, of mourning, or of grief, for this good soul. They would only express the love I have for her; they would only indicate my feelings toward her, for the noble and pure example she set before me and all who have known her. I could weep for joy in the knowledge that I possess that she, in her spirit life and being, is and will be associated with all those who have been endeared to her by the persecutions, the experiences and the trials through which she has had to pass in this world. With them she is rejoicing today, as one born out of death into life everlasting. She is not dead; she lives! What greater proof do you want of that fact

than to see her lifeless form? Who is she? This is her casket. This is her mortal tenement; this is but the clay that enveloped the immortal, living Aunt Rachel, the living spirit. The spirit has fled. Her spirit, the immortal part, has departed from this tabernacle; hence, this tabernacle lies here lifeless and ready to return to mother earth from whence it came, but to be restored again, every element to be recalled and re-formed in its perfect frame, when Aunt Rachel will come and take possession of it and inherit it forever, just as Christ came and took up his body that was not suffered to see corruption, and inherited it in its immortal state, never to be separated again; so it will be with her.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 12, p. 591, June, 1909. Speech at the funeral services of Rachel Grant, mother of President Heber J. Grant.

NO NEW PRINCIPLES IN THE GOSPEL. We have no new principles to advocate; but we have come to preach the gospel of life and salvation, to testify to the divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, through whose instrumentality the truth was restored in this dispensation.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 21, p. 98, December, 1917.

FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH. We hear frequently of men who throw discredit on the doctrine of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, because some of the principles, doctrines, and philosophy which he taught are said to have been spoken before his day by heathen philosophers.

A variety of examples are sometimes quoted to show that the ideals which have grown from the doctrines of Christ are a direct development of what is found in the teachings of the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms and in the second part of Isaiah. But, on the other hand, it is just as certain that these ideals receive a finish and an enrichment, by the touch of the Savior, vastly beyond and above what they possessed before, and also they are placed

on deeper and firmer foundations. This, let it be said to begin with, is because they were his before they were ever uttered by man.

Even in the five distinctive and characteristic topics generally considered by commentators original in the teachings of Jesus, we find little if anything new, except the enlargement. These are named as, the Fatherhood of God, the Kingdom of God ; subjects or members of the Kingdom ; the Messiah ; the Holy Ghost ; and the Tri-unity of God.

But the idea of the Fatherhood of God was not unknown either to the Pagans or to Israel. Zeus, from the time of Homer, had borne the name "father of gods and men." But, both in Jewish and Pagan literature, the idea was superficial and meant little more than "originator" (Gen. 1:26) ; and in the old Jewish scripture God is more particularly called the "Father of his people, Israel" (Deut. 14:1 ; Isaiah 63:16). But in the teachings of Christ there is a fuller embodiment of revelation in the word Father, and the application which he makes of the Fatherhood of God invests his life with supreme tenderness and beauty. As an example: In the old scripture, we are told, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psalms 103:13) ; but by the interpretation of Jesus, the love of God as Father extends beyond these limitations even to those who are unthankful and evil: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again ; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest ; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35).

And so with other doctrines of Christ; while perhaps not new they are enriched by the addition of fuller, broader, more loving conceptions of God and his purposes; in which compulsion was eliminated and lowly service, love, and self-sacrifice were substituted and made the true forces of an acceptable life. Even the answer to the lawyer's question, often called the eleventh commandment: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" had been given to the children of Israel (Lev. 19:19), over two thousand years before its perfected meaning was impressed upon the learned Pharisee (Matt. 22:34, 40).

But what of all this? Are we therefore to discredit the teachings of the Savior? Verily no. Let it be remembered that Christ was with the Father from the beginning, that the gospel of truth and light existed from the beginning and is from everlasting to everlasting. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as one God, are the fountain of truth. From this fountain all the ancient learned philosophers have received their inspiration and wisdom—from it they have received all their knowledge. If we find truth in broken fragments through the ages, it may be set down as an incontrovertible fact that it originated at the fountain, and was given to philosophers, inventors, patriots, reformers, and prophets by the inspiration of God. It came from him through his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, in the first place, and from no other source. It is eternal.

Christ, therefore, being the fountain of truth, is no imitator. He taught the truth first; it was his before it was given to man. When he came to the earth he not only proclaimed new thought, but repeated some of the everlasting principles which had been heretofore only partly understood and enunciated by the wisest of men. And in so doing he enlarged in every instance upon the wisdom which they had originally received from him, because of his superior abilities and wisdom and his association with the Father and the

Holy Ghost. He did not imitate men. They made known in their imperfect way what the inspiration of Jesus Christ had taught them, for they obtained their enlightenment first from him.

Christ taught the gospel to Adam and made known his truths to Abraham and the prophets. He was the inspirer of the ancient philosophers, Pagan or Israelite, as well as of the great characters of modern times. Columbus, in discovery; Washington, in the struggle for freedom; Lincoln, in emancipation and union; Bacon, in philosophy; Franklin, in statesmanship and diplomacy; Stephenson, in steam; Watts, in song; Edison, in electricity, and Joseph Smith, in theology and religion, found in Christ the source of their wisdom and the marvelous truths which they advocated.

Calvin, Luther, Malanchthon, and all the reformers, were inspired in thoughts, words, and actions, to accomplish what they did for the amelioration, liberty and advancement of the human race. They paved the way for the more perfect gospel of truth to come. Their inspiration, as with that of the ancients, came from the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the one true and living God. This may also truthfully be said concerning the Revolutionary fathers of this nation, and all who have in the ages past contributed to the progress of civil and religious freedom. There is no light nor truth which did not come to them first from him. Men are mere repeaters of what he has taught them. He has voiced no thoughts originating with man. The teachings of Jesus did not begin with his incarnation; for, like truth, he is eternal. He not only inspired the ancients, from the beginning, but when he came to earth he reiterated eternal, original truth, and added gloriously to the revelations men had uttered. When he returned to the Father he still took and does take an interest in his children and people, by revealing to them new truths, and by inspiring their

actions; and, as men grow in the knowledge of God, they shall become more and more like him unto the perfect day, when his knowledge shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep.

It is folly, therefore, to discredit the Savior on the grounds that he has uttered nothing new; for, with the Father and the Spirit, he is the author of that which persists—the truth—that which has been, that which is, and that which will continue forever.—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 10, pp. 627-630, 1906-7.

ETERNITY OF THE SPIRIT OF MAN. Again, where are we going? We come here and sojourn in the flesh a little season and then we pass away. Every soul that is born into the world will die. There is not a soul that has escaped death, except those upon whom God has passed, by the power of his Spirit, that they should live in the flesh until the second coming of the Son of Man; but they will eventually have to pass through the ordeal called death; it may be in the twinkling of an eye, and without pain or suffering; but they will pass through the change, because it is an irrevocable edict of the Almighty. "In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die." This was the edict of the Almighty, and it pertains to Adam—that is, all the human race; for Adam is many, and it means you and me and every soul that lives and that bears the image of the Father. We shall all die. But is that the end of our being? If we had an existence before we came here we certainly shall continue that existence when we leave here. The spirit will continue to exist as it did before, with the additional advantages derived from having passed through this probation. It is absolutely necessary that we should come to the earth and take upon us tabernacles; because if we did not have tabernacles we could not be like God, or like Jesus Christ. God has a tabernacle of flesh and bone. He is an organized being just as we are who are now in the flesh. Jesus Christ

was born of his mother, Mary. He had a fleshly tabernacle; he was crucified on the cross, and his body was raised from the dead. He burst the bonds of the grave and came forth to newness of life, a living soul, a living being, a man with a body, and with parts and with spirit—the spirit and the body becoming a living and immortal soul. You and I have got to do the same thing. We must go through the same ordeal in order to attain to the glory and exaltation which God designed we should enjoy with him in the eternal worlds. In other words, we must become like him; peradventure to sit upon thrones, to have dominion, power and eternal increase. God designed this in the beginning. We are the children of God. He is an eternal being, without beginning of days or end of years. He always was, he is, he always will be. We are precisely in the same condition and under the same circumstances that God our heavenly Father was when he was passing through this or a similar ordeal. We are destined to come forth out of the grave as Jesus did, and to obtain immortal bodies as he did—that is, that our tabernacles are to become immortal as his became immortal, that the spirit and the body may be joined together and become one living being, indivisible, inseparable, eternal.—*Deseret Weekly News*, Vol. 33, pp. 130, 131.

PURPOSES OF THE ALMIGHTY UNCHANGEABLE. The purposes of the Almighty are unchanged and unchangeable. His laws endure, and he is the same yesterday, today and forever. His purposes will ripen and be consummated and his designs be completed. Therefore, if we do not conform to his will, obey his laws and yield to his requirements in this world, we will be consigned to the “prison house,” where we will remain until we pay the debt to the uttermost farthing.—*Deseret Weekly News*, Vol. 24, 1875, p. 708.