**DC 6               Historical Background: Oliver Cowdery meets Joseph Smith**

In late 1828, Oliver Cowdery began teaching school in Palmyra. Since Hyrum was a member of the local school board, Oliver was invited to stay at the Smith home.

**Lucy Mack Smith**

He (Oliver) had been in the school but a short time, when he began to hear from all quarters concerning the plates, and as soon began to importune Mr. Smith (Joseph Smith, Sr.) upon the subject, but for a considerable length of time did not succeed in eliciting any information. At last, however, he gained my husband's confidence, so far as to obtain a sketch of the facts relative to the plates.

Shortly after receiving this information, he told Mr. Smith that he was highly delighted with what he had heard, that he had been in a deep study upon the subject all day, and that it was impressed upon his mind, that he should yet have the privilege of writing for Joseph. Furthermore, that he had determined to pay him a visit at the close of the school, which he was then teaching.

On coming in on the following day, he said, “The subject upon which we were yesterday conversing seems working in my very bones, and I cannot, for a moment, get it out of my mind; finally, I have resolved on what I will do. Samuel, I understand, is going down to Pennsylvania to spend the spring with Joseph; I shall make my arrangements to be ready to accompany him thither, by the time he recovers his health; for I have made it a subject of prayer, and I firmly believe that it is the will of the Lord that I should go. If there is a work for me to do in this thing, I am determined to attend to it.”

Mr. Smith told him, that he supposed it was his privilege to know whether this was the case, and advised him to seek for a testimony for himself, which he did, and received the witness spoken of in the Book of *Doctrine and Covenants,* section viii. (most likely D&C 6:22-24 rather than section 8)

From this time, Oliver was so completely absorbed in the subject of the Record, that it seemed impossible for him to think or converse about anything else.

…In April, Samuel and Mr. Cowdery set out for Pennsylvania. The weather, for some time previous, had been very wet and disagreeable—raining, freezing, and thawing alternately, which had rendered the roads almost impassable, particularly in the middle of the day. Notwithstanding, Mr. Cowdery was not to be detained either by wind or weather, and they persevered until they arrived at Joseph's.

Joseph had been so hurried with his secular affairs that he could not proceed with his spiritual concerns so fast as was necessary for the speedy completion of the work; there was also another disadvantage under which he labored, his wife had so much of her time taken up with the care of her house, that she could write for him but a small portion of the time. On account of these embarrassments, Joseph called upon the Lord, three days prior to the arrival of Samuel and Oliver, to send him a scribe, according to the promise of the angel; and he was informed that the same should be forthcoming in a few days. Accordingly, when Mr. Cowdery told him the business that he had come upon, Joseph was not at all surprised.

They sat down and conversed together till late. During the evening Joseph told Oliver his history, as far as was necessary for his present information, in the things which mostly concerned him. And the next morning they commenced the work of translation, in which they were soon deeply engaged. (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* [Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, Inc., 1945], 139-142.)

**DC 6:3 Behold, the field is white already to harvest**

**Spencer W. Kimball**

Our charge to carry the gospel to all nations is divine. We need more missionaries. We need more qualified couples. We need the missionary-age young men of the Church to step forward in even greater numbers than they are doing now so they can assume their rightful responsibility, privilege, and blessing as the Lord’s servants in the missionary cause. How strengthened we and they would be if all young men readied themselves for the Lord’s work!

Members of the Church responded faithfully to the call of a few years ago and we doubled our missionary force. But we hope to now again lengthen our stride, to again quicken our step, and to again move out in greater strength to fulfill the Lord’s commandment. (“Are We Doing All We Can?” *Ensign*, Feb. 1983, 3)

**DC 6:6 seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion**

“Four times during 1829 the Lord directed Joseph Smith to ‘seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.’ (See D&C 6:6; D&C 11:6; D&C 12:6; D&C 14:6.) From the time of this command until the day of the martyrdom, the Prophet labored diligently toward this end. This motive of his ministry was once tersely described in these words: ‘We ought to have the building of Zion as our greatest object.’ (*History of the Church*, 3:390)

“The vision of a modern Zion was not a fanciful Utopian scheme, nor one of the contemporary communal experiments. The Prophet’s vision came by revelation, making him intimately familiar with the glory of Enoch’s Zion. He sought for the Saints of this dispensation the same approbation which the Lord had given to the Saints of Enoch’s day: ‘And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.’ (Moses 7:18)

“The commandment to reestablish Zion became for the Saints of Joseph Smith’s day the central goal of the Church. But it was a goal the Church did not realize because its people were not fully prepared. In the wisdom of God, who comprehends the end from the beginning, the redemption of Zion will assuredly come as promised, but not until he has a prepared people who can live by Zion’s laws.” (William O. Nelson, “To Prepare a People,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1979, 18)

**DC 6:7 Seek not for riches but for wisdom**

**Franklin D. Richards**

Recently, two young people and one older man have come to me and explained that, although they are successful in a material way, they are unhappy and confused. Each asked my advice as to how he could remedy his situation.

I told them that the Lord had already answered that question when he said:

   Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich. (D&C 6:7.)

I suggested that they probably needed to change their priorities in life and seek after wisdom rather than after so many material things and pleasures. (“Seek Not for Riches But for Wisdom,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 35)

**Rudger Clawson**

Now, we have before us, on the one hand, the riches of eternity, and, on the other hand, the riches of the earth. Which will you choose? If you choose the riches of eternity, then all other things will be added unto you. If you choose the riches of the earth, you may lose all else, yea, even the riches of the earth. There are many, very many among the Latter-day Saints who are rich today, and others who are growing rich; but they do not derive their happiness from riches. There are five sources from which the Saints derive inestimable happiness, and in which the principle and power of wealth has no influence whatever: The first is the possession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the second is the contemplation of spiritual things in that Gospel; the third is the blessings of the house of God, in which the endowments are given, and the principle of marriage for eternity is revealed; the fourth is the preaching of the Gospel to a fallen world, thus bringing to pass the redemption of mankind; and the fifth is administering the necessities of life to the worthy poor. This is what brings happiness, pure and unsullied happiness, to the Latter-day Saints. Let us seek after these things. (*Conference Report, April 1910*, Second Day—Morning Session 67 - 68.)

**DC 6:7 he that hath eternal life is rich**

The Lord declared, “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). Well isn’t the kingdom of heaven better than any kingdom of this earth? Is this beatitude merely an eloquent expression or does it have any real meaning? If we believe that the Lord will give the kingdom of heaven to those who are poor in spirit, then we begin to understand the nature of the riches of eternity. They entitle one to all that the Father hath (DC 76:55; 84:38).

The best possible financial advice is to seek the riches of eternity rather than the riches of mortality. The latter gives immediate returns but eventually leaves one poor and destitute. On the other hand, the riches of eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God, bestow wealth which exceeds the most extravagant imagination. Walking on streets of gold, in a city made of pure gold, surrounded by gates made of precious jewels (Rev. 21:18-21), the exalted will make the tycoons and billionaires of this generation look like paupers, both temporally and spiritually.

**Rudger Clawson**

I remember reading about the funeral of a brother in moderate financial circumstances. **President [Brigham] Young** was one of the speakers, and he pointed to the casket in which the remains were resting under the pulpit and said: “There lies a rich man.” And yet he had been poor all his lifetime in the flesh. (*Conference Report, October 1939*, First Day—Morning Meeting 31.)

**DC 6:9 Say nothing but repentance unto this generation**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

As I have sought direction from the Lord, I have had reaffirmed in my mind and heart the declaration of the Lord to “say nothing but repentance unto this generation.” (D&C 6:9; D&C 11:9.) This has been a theme of every latter-day prophet, along with their testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

Repentance was the cry of our late and great prophet, Spencer W. Kimball. This theme permeated his talks and the pages of his writings, such as his marvelous book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. And it must be our cry today, both to member and to nonmember alike—repent. (“Cleansing the Inner Vessel,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 4)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

Today is our day for repentance. It is a day for each of us to take stock of our situations and to change our lives as necessary.

When we make mistakes, we need to travel the road of repentance. We need to have a personal testimony of this miracle that brings forgiveness. Each one of us needs to understand that repentance can be properly applied in his life as well as in the lives of others. Thus, the mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to call people everywhere to repentance so that they might know the joys of gospel living. The cry of repentance is to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (“The Gospel of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 2)

**Neil L. Andersen**

Repentance is powerful spiritual medicine. There are few spiritual ills it will not cure. Each sin we leave behind through our faith in the living Christ—both those of commission and those of omission—opens spiritual doors. As we feel the potency of repentance, we better understand why Christ admonished the early missionaries of this dispensation to “say nothing but repentance unto this generation” (D&C 6:9; D&C 11:9; see also D&C 19:21). (“The Joy of Becoming Clean,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 52)

**DC 6:10 Behold thou hast a gift**

“Oliver Cowdery's gift was the spirit of revelation (Section 8:3, 4), by which he could obtain knowledge of things divine. He also had the gift of Aaron. Aaron was the spokesman of Moses, and Oliver Cowdery became the first spokesman of the Prophet, or of the Church, when, on the 30th of April, 1830, he preached the first public discourse in this dispensation.” (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 35.)

**DC 6:11 if thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous**

**Joseph Smith**

God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* 149.)

**Dallin H. Oaks**

…each of us should pray that the Lord will unfold the scriptures to our understanding. (D&C 32:4.) God has promised that if we ask him, we will“receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that [we may] know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.” (D&C 42:61.) (*The Lord's Way* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991], 34.)

**DC 6:12 Trifle not with sacred things**

**Bernard P. Brockbank**

“Trifle not with sacred things.” Many trifle with the sacred commandment “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matt. 22:37.) Some disrespect God and love his worldly creations more than they love God. They love the creature more than they love the Creator. Some love pleasure more than they love God.

Many of the Lord’s children trifle with the sacred privilege of eternal marriage by the Lord’s priesthood in his temples. The Lord said that through his priesthood male and female should be “one flesh” when married. (See Matt. 19:5–6.) Many settle for “until death do you part.” They trifle with sacred things.

Many trifle with the sacred commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14) and indulge their minds and bodies in illicit, promiscuous sex acts. From the teachings of the scriptures we find that those that are guilty of illicit sex acts, unless they repent, cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Some trifle with the Lord’s sacred, hallowed Sabbath day and spend the day in sports, pleasure, and other worldly interests when they should have been resting from worldly interests and devoting time to the spiritual side of life in reading the scriptures, attending religious meetings, in developing greater love for God, self, neighbor, and family.

Some trifle with the sacred scriptures. Jesus commanded, “Search the scriptures.” (John 5:39.) They ignore the scriptures and fail to search them. Some trifle with the Lord’s divine law of tithing and choose to rob God of his tithing, and as a result, the Lord said they are cursed with a curse, and unless they repent they cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Some trifle with the sacred responsibility of doing their genealogy research and temple work for both the living and the dead. Some trifle with their sacred godlike minds and bodies and use drugs and stimulants to receive a lift when they should receive their lift from repentance and from knowing and loving God and living his commandments.

Some trifle with the priesthood of God and destroy and make mockery out of its power. The Lord said they do this because they become so engrossed in worldly interests. (See D&C 121:34–35.)

Some trifle with the sacred right to have children. Some trifle with the sacred right to love their neighbors as themselves. Some trifle with their sacred right to pray to their Father in heaven. They make up excuses and philosophies that make prayers look unwise and foolish.

Some trifle with the sacred commandment, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48.) Perfection is the divine way and comes through repentance and following Jesus Christ. Each of us should make a list using God’s commandments of what we need to do to attain salvation in the kingdom of God. (“The Divine Power of Repentance,” Ensign, Nov. 1974, 58)

**Ezra Taft Benson**

In 1829, the Lord warned the Saints that they are not to trifle with sacred things. (See D&C 6:12.) Surely the Book of Mormon is a sacred thing, and yet many trifle with it, or in other words, take it lightly, treat it as though it is of little importance. (“The Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 2)

**L. Lionel Kendrick**

To receive revelation, we must develop a spirit of reverence. **Elder Boyd K. Packer** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled, “Inspiration comes more easily in peaceful settings.” He added, “Irreverence suits the purposes of the adversary by obstructing the delicate channels of revelation in both mind and spirit,” and “Reverence invites revelation.”

Irreverence not only shows disrespect to Deity but also makes it hard for the Spirit to teach us the things we need to know. The Savior said, “And your minds in times past have been darkened because … you have treated lightly the things you have received” (D&C 84:54). He counseled,”Trifle not with sacred things” (D&C 6:12). The process of receiving revelation is sacred. It is a divine discussion with Deity and must be reverenced if it is to work. (“Personal Revelation,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1999, 8)

**DC 6:14 as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit**

**Sheri L. Dew**

This Church is a Church of revelation. Our challenge is not one of getting the Lord to speak to us. Our problem is hearing what He has to say. He has promised, “As often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit” (D&C 6:14).

It is vital that we, the sisters of Relief Society, learn to hear the voice of the Lord. Yet I worry that too often we fail to seek the guidance of the Spirit. Perhaps we don’t know how and haven’t made it a priority to learn. Or we’re so aware of our personal failings that we don’t feel worthy, don’t really believe the Lord will talk to us, and therefore don’t seek revelation. Or we’ve allowed the distractions and pace of our lives to crowd out the Spirit. What a tragedy! …No wonder that one of the adversary’s favorite tactics among righteous LDS women is busyness—getting us so preoccupied with the flurry of daily life that we fail to immerse ourselves in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sisters, we can’t afford not to seek the things of the Spirit! There is too much at stake. Too many people are depending on us as mothers, as sisters, leaders, and friends. A woman led by the Lord knows where to turn for answers and for peace. She can make difficult decisions and face problems with confidence because she takes her counsel from the Spirit. (“We Are Not Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 95–96)

**DC 6:16 there is none else save God that knowest the thoughts and the intents of thy heart**

**Joseph Smith**

After we had received this revelation (DC 6), Oliver Cowdery stated to me that after he had gone to my father's to board, and after the family had communicated to him concerning my having obtained the plates, that one night after he had retired to bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so, and the Lord manifested to him that they were true, but he had kept the circumstance entirely secret, and had mentioned it to no one; so that after this revelation was given, he knew that the work was true, because no being living knew of the thing alluded to in the revelation, but God and himself. (*History of the Church*, 1:35)

**DC 6:17 the work which thou hast been writing are true**

“God himself has borne solemn witness of the Book of Mormon. To Oliver Cowdery, who was raised up to serve as scribe in the translation, the Lord affirmed: ‘I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart. I tell thee these things as a witness unto thee-that *the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true’.* (D&C 6:16-17, italics added; compareD&C 18:2.)

“The Almighty set his own seal of truthfulness upon the Nephite record by an oath when he said: ‘And he [Joseph Smith] has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and *as your Lord and your God liveth it is true’*(D&C 17:6, italics added). Referring to that statement, a modern Apostle said: ‘This is God's testimony of the Book of Mormon. In it Deity himself has laid his godhood on the line. Either the book is true or God ceases to be God. There neither is nor can be any more formal or powerful language known to inert or gods.’ (Bruce R. McConkie, *CR*, April 1982, p. 50.) ‘Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book?’ **President Ezra Taft Benson** asked. He answered: ‘Yes, either to our blessing or our condemnation.’ (*A Witness and a Warning,*p 7.)” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet,*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon,*4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987-1992], 4: 385.)

**DC 6:20 I will encircle thee in the arms of my love**

“[As a single adult] the traditional ‘home and hearth’ scenario has not been part of my experience (although it has been elegantly played out in the lives of many of my closest friends), but I have come to know the sweetness of a home in the gospel. This thought brings to mind images of warm, accepting, comfortable relationships—the kinds of relationships the Savior would approve and bless. For me to experience this feeling of home, however, took a series of experiences through which I gained a fuller understanding of what the Lord had in mind when he counseled us to‘love one another’ (John 13:34).

“One such experience came some years ago, when I reluctantly arose before dawn to drive alone on icy roads to a women’s conference. It was an assignment in connection with my work, and I expected a day of hearing the same things I’d heard so many times before. My negative attitude weighed on me, and it occurred to me that a few moments of contemplation as I prepared to leave would put me in a better frame of mind for the conference. I randomly opened the Doctrine and Covenants to section 6 and started reading the Lord’s message to Oliver Cowdery: ‘Behold, thou art Oliver, and I have spoken unto thee because of thy desires; therefore treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and *I will encircle thee in the arms of my love’*(D&C 6:20; emphasis added).

“Almost instantly, the beauty and comfort of this verse enveloped my being like a warm glove. What could be more wonderful, more holy, more cherished than feeling the Savior’s arms around me, shielding me from a world of hurt, strengthening me for days ahead, and protecting me from the chill of loneliness?

“Then, as suddenly as the feeling came, it vanished. I felt more alone than ever. Where were those loving arms now, that bright circle of love? Why did I feel so alone, so isolated, so out of touch? I knelt and asked the Lord those questions. In response I heard only the echo of my own voice. I headed toward my assignment with a heavy heart.

“The conference bustled with bright-eyed women of all ages, each one seeming to anticipate a choice experience that day. I could sense their energy and enthusiasm, but I did not feel part of them. My eyes scanned the crowd indifferently as I walked to my seat.

“What happened next has become a permanent part of my spiritual memory bank. As I stopped to let a group of women pass, I heard an unmistakably familiar voice, the voice of a treasured friend, a former roommate who had married years before and was living in Idaho. The sound of her voice calling my name was like a refreshing spring rain on the parched desert of my heart. Three years had passed since I’d seen her, but time and distance seemed to melt away as we embraced. A clear, quiet voice spoke to my heart a message that I could not misunderstand: ‘I will encircle thee in the arms of my love.’ I knew at once that I was being taught an important lesson about the way people love, help, and comfort one another.

“Twice more before noon, I unexpectedly encountered beloved friends, long separated from me by time and distance, who shared my joy at our reunion. Each time, as we embraced, I sensed again the message of the scripture that had impressed me earlier: ‘I will encircle thee in the arms of my love.’

“Since that memorable day, I have come to understand how precious encircling arms can be in times of stress or need, and how the Lord often relies on his children to be his personal messengers of hope and love. That’s what life is about: creating a warm, loving environment, an emotional and spiritual home for those who come into our circles of influence in family, ward, or community.” (JoAnn Jolley, “Encircled in the Arms of Love,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1994, 51)

**DC 6:22 cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things**

While Oliver Cowdery stayed with the Smith family in Palmyra, he prayed earnestly to know what to do. Joseph Smith recorded, “one night after he had retired to bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so, and the Lord manifested to him that they were true.” (*History of the Church*, 1:35) Oliver was one of the first to pray for a testimony regarding Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, but he would not be the last.  Indeed, his search for a testimony becomes a type for all of us to follow. The testimony he received can be a type for all of us as well. Truly, the very manner in which he received testimony would be repeated over and over again—one investigator at a time. Doesn’t the Lord ask all of us the same question, “cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?”

How many testimonies have been born in just such a manner? How many times has Moroni’s invitation been answered with the Lord speaking peace to the mind of the inquirer? Isn’t this how the truth of the Book of Mormon is made manifest by the power of the Holy Ghost? Even lifelong members with strong testimonies need to reflect again and again—casting their minds upon the night, or the day when desire turned into testimony.

“Since my conversion 14 years ago, my testimony has been challenged many times. But each time when I am called upon to defend it, I recall my conversion experience.

“My mind reflects back to that particular night I received a witness of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It was a spiritual experience that I will never forget.

“I did not see any heavenly being but I felt the presence of the Holy Ghost. I felt warm and peaceful as I read the Book of Mormon.

“As I continued reading, I was drawn closer to God, and could feel His love for me and all mankind. The truthfulness of this book was manifested to me in unmistakable terms.

“Today when I am faced with spiritual challenges, I now turn to the Book of Mormon for spiritual support. I read it to further strengthen my conviction.

“My testimony is founded upon the Holy Spirit's witness to me and ‘what greater witness can you have than from God?’” (Stephen Lai, “Touched by the Scriptures”, *LDS Church News, 1988*, 02/27/88)

**DC 6:23 Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?**

**L. Lionel Kendrick**

The most frequent confirmation of the Spirit comes to us as peaceful feelings. The Spirit indeed “showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom” (D&C 39:6; see also D&C 36:2; D&C 42:61; D&C 111:8).

President Brigham Young quoted these words of the **Prophet Joseph Smith**: “They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits—it will whisper peace and joy to their souls.”

Feelings of peace are promptings and proof that the Spirit is bearing witness to us in response to our petitions. The Lord said to Oliver Cowdery through the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:23). (“Personal Revelation,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1999, 13)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

Learning the language of prayer is a joyous, lifetime experience. Sometimes ideas flood our mind as we listen after our prayers. Sometimes feelings press upon us. A spirit of calmness assures us that all will be well. But always, if we have been honest and earnest, we will experience a good feeling—a feeling of warmth for our Father in Heaven and a sense of his love for us. It has sorrowed me that some of us have not learned the meaning of that calm, spiritual warmth, for it is a witness to us that our prayers have been heard. And since our Father in Heaven loves us with more love than we have even for ourselves, it means that we can trust in his goodness, we can trust in him; it means that if we continue praying and living as we should, our Father’s hand will guide and bless us. (“Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 5)

**Rex D. Pinegar**

The peace God speaks to our minds will let us know when decisions we have made are right, when our course is true.

It can come as personal inspiration and guidance to assist us in our daily life—in our homes, in our work. It can provide us with courage and hope to meet the challenges of life. The miracle of prayer, to me, is that in the private, quiet chambers of our mind and heart, God both hears and answers prayers. (“Peace through Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 66-67)

**Dennis E. Simmons**

…all sincere seekers can have that same peace spoken to them. That peace comes from the assurances spoken by a still, small voice. The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit who generally communicates not through physical senses but by touching the heart and mind—in other words, He speaks through thoughts, impressions, and feelings and does so softly.

As **Elder Packer** has stated: “The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all.” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53). (“His Peace,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 31)

**DC 6:25 I grant unto you a gift…to translate, even as my servant Joseph**

Remarkably, the Lord was happy to let Oliver try translating the Book of Mormon. He had exalted Oliver to Joseph’s level, even commanding Oliver to admonish Joseph in his faults (v. 19). “A seer is greater than a prophet” (Mosiah 8:15), and Oliver was given the gift of seership and the spirit of revelation like unto Joseph. The only difference was how they magnified the gift.

**Marion G. Romney**

Oliver soon became anxious to receive and exercise the promised gift. Whereupon the Lord, through the Prophet, gave another revelation in which he confirmed his promise to Oliver and explained that the translations he could receive would come into his mind and heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, which, said the Lord, is the spirit of revelation. Listen now to the words of the revelation:

   Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive…

   Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come unto you and which shall dwell in your heart.

   Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground.

   Therefore, this is thy gift; apply unto it. (D&C 8:1-4)

Unfortunately for Oliver Cowdery, he never did properly “apply unto it.” In his attempt to exercise the gift, he failed. He was, of course, disappointed and had a disposition to complain. The Lord, therefore, in another revelation, explained the reason for his failure.

   Behold, I say unto you, my son, that because you did not translate according to that which you desired of me,. . .

   It is not expedient that you should translate at this present time.

   And, behold, it is because that you did not continue as you commenced, when you began to translate, that I have taken away this privilege from you. . . .

   Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

   But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

   But if it be not right you shall have no such feeling, but you shall have a stupor of thought. (D&C 9:1, 3, 5, 7-9)

(*Look to God and Live*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], 77.)

**DC 6:28 in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established**

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

Ever since the Lord sent out His disciples two by two, companionships have advanced the work of the Kingdom. The Lord’s law of witnesses requires that “in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” When the grieving women came to the empty tomb that first glorious Easter morn, it was two heavenly messengers who declared, “He is not here, but is risen.”

After the Lord’s ascension from the Mount of Olives, two messengers bore testimony of the risen Lord. And both the Father and the Son together visited Joseph Smith to begin the glorious work of the Restoration. In bearing testimony and establishing truth, two are better than one. (“Valued Companions,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 33)

**Robert D. Hales**

Oliver was given the unique blessing of being the second witness of the Restoration. He had seen visions, he had seen angels, he had seen the gold plates of the Book of Mormon, and he had seen the Lord. Joseph Smith, as Prophet, was sustained by Oliver Cowdery's witness to the translation and truthfulness of the Book of Mormon; the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John; and the restoration of the keys of the priesthood on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple with visitations of the Savior, Moses, Elias, and Elijah. The priesthood and the keys of this dispensation were bestowed on Joseph and Oliver so that we would have two testimonies as to the critical elements of the Restoration. All the above were among the most remarkable events witnessed in the history of the world. (*Heroes of the Restoration*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 14.)

**DC 6:29 they can do no more unto you than unto me**

The Lord has a way of putting things in perspective and putting us in our place. Sometimes we think that our problems are more difficult than anyone else’s. But the Lord has been through it all. Even if we are killed for our discipleship, we cannot teach him anything about persecution. In the vernacular of today, he can always say, “Been there, done that!” And so the Prophet would later be reminded, “If thou art called to pass through tribulation…know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?” (DC 122:5-8)

**DC 6:32 where two or three are gathered…there will I be in the midst of them**

**Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner**

(Kirtland, Ohio 1831) Mother and I went over to the Smith house. There were other visitors. The whole Smith family, excepting Joseph, was there. As we stood talking to them, Brother Joseph and Martin Harris came in, with two or three others. When the greetings were over, Brother Joseph looked around very solemnly. It was the first time some of them had ever seen him. He then said, "There are enough here to hold a little meeting."

A board was put across two chairs to make seats. Martin Harris sat on a little box at Joseph's feet. They sang and prayed; then Joseph got up to speak. He began very solemnly and very earnestly. All at once his countenance changed and he stood mute. He turned so white he seemed perfectly transparent. Those who looked at him that night said he looked like he had a searchlight within him, in every part of his body. I never saw anything like it on earth. I could not take my eyes away from him. He got so white that anyone who saw him would have thought he was transparent. I remember I thought we could almost see the bones through the flesh of his face. I shall remember it and see it in my mind's eye as long as I remain upon the earth.

He stood some moments looking over the congregation, as if to pierce each heart, then said, "Do you know who has been in your midst this night?"

One of the Smiths said, "An angel of the Lord."

Joseph did not answer. Martin Harris was sitting at the Prophet's feet on a box. He slid to his knees, clasped his arms around the Prophet's knees and said, "I know, it was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Joseph put his hand on Martin's head and answered, “Martin, God revealed that to you. Brothers and Sisters, the Savior has been in your midst this night. I want you all to remember it. There is a veil over your eyes, for you could not endure to look upon Him. You must be fed with milk and not strong meat. I want you to remember this as if it were the last thing that escaped my lips. He has given you all to me, and commanded me to seal you up to everlasting life, that where He is there you may be also. And if you are tempted of Satan say, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan, for my salvation is secure.’”

Then he knelt and prayed, and such a prayer I never heard before or since. I felt he was talking to the Lord, and the power rested upon us all. (Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus, comps., *They Knew the Prophet* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974], 22-23.)

**Joseph Smith**

I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth, who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in their midst, and they did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 107)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

His pledge that he will be in our midst when two or three are gathered together in his name is a wonderful declaration of his unbounded love for us and assures us of his presence in our church services, in our individual lives, and in the intimate circles of our families. (*Finding Peace in Our Lives*, 97.)

**DC 6:34 fear not, little flock**

**M. Russell Ballard**

To all who have harbored feelings of despair and an absence of hope, I offer the words of the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith:

   Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. … Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not (D&C 6:34, 36), even so am I in the midst of you (D&C 6:32).

My message to you today, my brothers and sisters, is simply this: the Lord is in control. He knows the end from the beginning. He has given us adequate instruction that, if followed, will see us safely through any crisis. His purposes will be fulfilled, and someday we will understand the eternal reasons for all of these events. Therefore, today we must be careful to not overreact, nor should we be caught up in extreme preparations; but what we must do is keep the commandments of God and never lose hope!

But where do we find hope in the midst of such turmoil and catastrophe? Quite simply, our one hope for spiritual safety during these turbulent times is to turn our minds and our hearts to Jesus Christ. (“The Joy of Hope Fulfilled,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 32)

**DC 6:34 let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail**

Imagine all the forces of this earth combined against you. What a horrible thought! Now consider that the veil was rent and you could look upon all of Satan’s minions gathered together to destroy you. In their faces, you see gnarled expressions and gnashing teeth conveying unimaginable hatred and malice. How could anyone survive such a deluge of evil? Perhaps Job and Jesus are the only ones who know for sure.

The remarkable promise of the Lord is that all these forces—even combining all their power—cannot overcome one who simply builds upon the rock of Christ, “for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.” What an amazing promise!

**Jack H. Goaslind**

Satan wants us to fail to reach that mountaintop that will allow us to develop a testimony so powerful that he will be unable to influence us. His work is to thwart our efforts, but the Lord has counseled us, “Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail” (D&C 6:34).

We have every confidence that earth and hell will not overtake you, but it will require that you move from your current plateaus and climb to higher ground.

May I close with the powerful words of our beloved prophet, **Gordon B. Hinckley**, and I quote: “Go forward with your lives. The best lies ahead. Bring into the lives of our young people something more of spirituality; cultivate in the heart of every boy [and girl] a sense of [their] relationship to the Lord—as [they] become acquainted with the Savior of the world by knowing some elements of the atonement of the Redeemer through which eternal life is made possible for each of us” (West High seminary graduation, Salt Lake City, 14 May 1995; priesthood leadership meeting, Heber City/Springville, Utah, regional conference, 13 May 1995). (“Spiritual Mountaintops,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 11)

**DC 6:36 Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought.” (D&C 6:36.) Looking unto the Lord in every thought is the only possible way we can be the kind of men and women we ought to be.

The Lord asked the question of His disciples, “What manner of men ought ye to be?” He then answered His own question by saying, “Even as I am.” (3 Ne. 27:27.) To become as He is, we must have Him on our minds—constantly in our thoughts. Every time we partake of the sacrament, we commit to “always remember him.” (Moro. 4:3; Moro. 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79.)

If our thoughts make us what we are, and we are to be like Christ, then we must think Christlike thoughts. (“Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 4)

**Robert L. Backman**

“All other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages” to the testimony of Jesus—his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 121.)

A little girl, misquoting the twenty-third Psalm, put everything in perspective. She said, “The Lord is my shepherd. That’s all I want!” What more could anyone want? What could be more desirable than to “look unto [Jesus] in every thought”? (D&C 6:36.) (“Jesus the Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 8)

**DC 6:37 Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet**

Without some miraculous visitation, we cannot literally behold the wounds of Christ’s crucifixion. Yet through this admonition to Oliver, we too are commanded to behold his wounds. How can this be? The Lord must be asking us to behold his wounds with our spiritual eyes not our mortal ones. We know we must “always remember him” (DC 20:77). We must think about his atoning sacrifice. We must look upon his wounds so that our own may be healed. As we look upon his pain, our own pain is miraculously taken away. Inevitably, our vision increases. To behold Christ is to be truly visionary, for he has declared, “he that seeth me seeth him that sent me” (John 12:45). Otherwise, we become as one that is “blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Pet. 1:13).