

## Chapter 2

### Attempts to Teach

Throughout the history of the earth, from Adam to our present day, all the prophets have attempted to prepare the people to receive higher laws than they previously had. They attempted to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom by teaching the people line upon line and precept upon precept until they could bring them to a point where the laws of the Celestial Kingdom could be taught and obeyed. With but few exceptions all these attempts were in vain. The reason for the failure of the prophets to accomplish their desire was not of their own doing but was the wickedness and hardness of the hearts of the people. Moses, for example, tried to bring his people into the presence of God but they would not. In 1832 the Lord stated:

"Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fullness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel." (D&C 84:23-26.)

Moses greatly desired to help the Israelites acquire the second comforter and perhaps even translation, as Enoch had done in a preceding dispensation. But the people were too steeped in their traditions and spiritual darkness. Because of this they were forbidden their endowments and the Melchizedek Priesthood. President Brigham Young explained:

"If they had been sanctified and holy, the children of Israel would not have traveled one year with Moses before they would have received their endowments and the Melchizedek Priesthood. But they could not receive them, and never did. Moses left them, and they did not receive the fullness of that Priesthood ... The Lord told Moses that he would show himself to the people; but they begged Moses to plead with the Lord not to do so. (J.D. 6:100.)

Referring to this same incident Orson Pratt wrote:

"It was, in ancient days, a great calamity to Israel, when the Lord swore in his wrath that he would not go up in their midst, but that he would send an angel before them. Why did the Lord

"Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now. But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them; And are not united according to the union required by the law of the Celestial Kingdom; And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself. And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer." (D&C 105:2-6.)

The law of consecration and stewardship had been revealed to the people, but, as the Lord stated, they were too selfish to live the law. The celestial law of plural marriage had also been revealed to Joseph Smith for the benefit of the people, so that they could organize a Zion society as Enoch had done. However, as Joseph tested the saints he found them to be very unreceptive to this higher law. John D. Lee wrote:

"During the winter, Joseph, the Prophet, set a man by the name of Sidney Hay Jacobs, to select from the Old Bible such scriptures as pertained to polygamy, or celestial marriage, and to write it in pamphlet form, and to advocate that doctrine. This he did as a feeler among the people, to pave the way for celestial marriage. This, like all other notions, met with opposition, while a few favored it. The excitement among the people became so great that the subject was laid before the Prophet. No one was more opposed to it than was his brother Hyrum, who denounced it as from beneath. Joseph saw that it would break up the Church, should he sanction it, so he denounced the pamphlet through the Wasp, a newspaper published at Nauvoo, by E. Robinson, as a bundle of nonsense and trash. He said if he had known its contents he would never have permitted it to be published, while at the same time other confidential men were advocating it on their own responsibility. Joseph himself said on the stand, that should he reveal the will of God concerning them, that they, pointing to President W. Marks, P. P. Pratt, and others, would shed his blood. He urged them to surrender themselves to God instead of rebelling against the stepping stone of exaltation. In this way he worked upon the feelings and minds of the people, until they feared that the anger of the Lord would be kindled against them, and they insisted upon knowing the will of heaven concerning them. But he dared not proclaim it publicly, so it was taught confidentially to such as were strong enough in the faith to take another step." (Mormonism Unveiled, p. 146)

In 1855, President George A. Smith explained:

"Now if the Lord had considered it wisdom, on the day of the Kirtland endowment and great solemn assembly, to come forward and reveal to the children of men the facts that are laid down plainly in the Bible, and had told them that without the law of sealing, no man could be exalted to a throne in the celestial kingdom that is, without he had a woman by his side; and that no woman could be exalted in the celestial world, without she was exalted with a man at her head... had He revealed this simple sentiment, up would have jumped some man, saying, "What! got to have a woman sealed to me in order to be saved, in order to be exalted to thrones, dominions, and eternal increase?" "Yes!" "I do not believe in any of this nonsense." At the same time, perhaps somebody else might have had faith to receive it. Again up jumps somebody else, "Brother Joseph, I have had two wives in my lifetime, cannot I have them both in eternity?" "No." If he had said yes, perhaps we should all have apostatized at once." (JD 2:216.)

President Smith explained this problem in greater detail years later after the people were better able to understand the principle of sealing, stating that in 1843 Joseph once again went to the stand and taught the law of plural marriage:

"Whereupon, the Prophet goes up on the stand, and, after preaching about everything else he could think of in the world, at last hints at the idea of the law of redemption, makes a bare hint at the law of sealing, and it produced such a tremendous excitement that, as soon as he had got his dinner half eaten, he had to go back to the stand, and unpreach all that he had preached, and left the people to guess at the matter. While he was thus preaching he turned to the men sitting in the stand, and who were the men who should have backed him up, (Marks, Law, Cowles, & others) and said, "If I were to reveal the things that God has revealed to me, if I were to reveal to this people the doctrines that I know are for their exaltation, these men would spill my blood." (JD 2:217.)

How discouraging it must have been for the prophet to know doctrines essential for exaltation yet be unable to teach or share them with others because of their lack of faith or their stiffneckedness. How must he have felt to know that if he were to reveal the laws of the celestial kingdom that even his most trusted and closest friends, his counselors in the First Presidency, Stake Presidency and even some of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve would seek his life. How alone he must have felt! Elder John Taylor explained some of the many problems Joseph had in trying to teach

doctrine to the saints by saying:

"When Joseph Smith had anything from God to communicate to the children of men or to the Church, what was it he had to fight against all the day long? It was the prejudices of the people; and, in many instances, he could not and dare not reveal the word of God to the people, for fear they would rise up and reject it. How many times he faltered? It was not that he was particularly afraid; but he had to look after the welfare and salvation of the people. If the Prophet Joseph had revealed everything which the Lord manifested to him, it would have proven the overthrow of the people in many instances; hence he had to treat them like children, and feed them upon milk, and unfold principles gradually, just as they could receive them.

"Was all this because it was so hard to comprehend correct principles? No, it was because we were babes and children, and could not understand." (JD 6:165.)

On another occasion Joseph was speaking with Brigham Young and remarked:

"Brother Brigham, if I was to reveal to this people what the Lord has revealed to me there is not a man or a woman (that) would stay with me." (Ref. unlisted.)

The brethren quoted here point out some very important concepts. Joseph Smith had great knowledge revealed to him which is necessary for all of us to receive, being essential for our exaltation. The saints were not spiritually capable of receiving or understanding it at that time however. They, like most of us, had to be fed milk or they would have killed him. So, Joseph had to find some way to break down their traditions and prejudices so that he could get them to live higher laws and at the same time retain his life, and save the Church from splitting up. Wilford Woodruff wrote:

"Brother Joseph used a great many methods of testing the integrity of men: and he taught a great many things which, in consequence of tradition, required prayer, faith, and a testimony from the Lord, before they could be believed by many of the Saints. His mind was opened by the visions of the Almighty, and the Lord taught him many things by vision and revelation that were never taught publicly in his days; for the people could not bear the flood of intelligence which God poured into his mind." (JD 5:83-84.)

When Joseph received revelations from God, He was commanded many times not to reveal all of the revelation to the people. This was the case with the vision of the Glories as is now recorded in the 76th section of the

Doctrine and Covenants. Referring to this revelation the Prophet said: "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive it." (Historical Record, p. 515; JD 20:70.) The same holds true for the revelation on plural marriage now recorded in D&C 132, for the present text is but a small portion of the original revelation.

Joseph Smith was very open in expressing his frustrations at attempting to teach the doctrines of exaltation to the saints of his day. Said he just six months before his death:

"But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand." (Sunday, 21 Jan. 1844; TPJS, p. 331)

"Using more current terminology, this sentence translates: "It has been like splitting the knots of hemlock trees using a piece of corn bread for a wedge and a pumpkin for a sledge hammer."" (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 386)

About this same time the Prophet made the following comments:

"There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake. Many seal up the door of heaven by saying, So (how) far God may reveal and I will believe." (TPJS, p. 309.)

"I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions; they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen." (Sunday, 21 Jan. 1844; TPJS, p. 331.)

All who are familiar with church history know of the many acts of wickedness committed against the saints by the non-members but even many of the saints were so stiffnecked that they qualified for the denunciation that the Prophet made concerning those of his time period, saying:

"This generation is as corrupt as the generation of the Jews that crucified Christ; and if He were here today and should

preach the same doctrine He did then, they would put Him to death." (TPJS, p. 328.)

Amplifying upon this theme the Prophet continued:

"Many men will say, "I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times." But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens and are to be revealed to the children of men when they are prepared for them they will be the first to stone you and put you to death. It was this same principle that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and will cause the people to kill the prophets in this generation." (TPJS, p. 309.)

This is a very interesting statement by the prophet and at the same time a very discouraging concept. He states that not only will those from without seek to overthrow and destroy truth but that even those from within, the Judas's of the group, will be the most treacherous. Coming from their positions of trust and friendship, totally unexpected, they will be the first to crucify or stone you as you attempt to follow truth. Joseph elaborated upon this concept on another occasion:

"I desire the learning and wisdom of heaven alone. (I) have not the least idea but if Christ should come and preach such rough things as he preached to the Jews, but this generation would reject him for being so rough." (Sunday, 11 June 1843; Joseph Smith Diary; Words of Joseph Smith, p. 210) "If the Church knew all the commandments, one-half they would condemn through prejudice and ignorance." (TPJS, p. 112.)

Try as he did, Joseph was unable to prepare the saints as a body to receive the knowledge he had received from God. This was undoubtedly very frustrating to the Prophet. Andy Ehat explains that:

"Joseph Smith was already recognizing the difficulty he would have attempting to introduce all the knowledge and ordinances he had received by revelation. Undoubtedly the recently announced doctrine of baptism for the dead challenged the faith of some. Likewise also, he had only recently begun to preach the practice of plural marriage (1840), which met with decided opposition. It was these and other doctrinal developments that would try the faith of many saints and fly in the face of their prejudice. Often throughout the remainder of his life, Joseph Smith would lament that many saints were unwilling to accept the glorious things revealed to him from heaven." (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 55.)

During one of his public lamentations over the lack of desire to gain knowledge the Prophet expressed:

"The great thing for us to know is to comprehend what God did institute before the foundation of the world - Who knows it? ... had I inspiration, Revelation, and lungs to communicate what my soul has contemplated in times past there is not a soul in this congregation but would go to their minds and shut their mouths in everlasting silence on religion, till they had learned something.

"Why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain? You are welcome to all the knowledge... the sound saluted my ears. We are come to Mt. Zion. What could profit us to come unto the Spirits of Just Men but to learn, and come to the knowledge of the Spirits of the Just?" (Sunday, 13 Aug. 1843; Joseph Smith Diary; Words of Joseph Smith, p. 238-239.)

Joseph's greatest desire in life was to share the knowledge he had gained with others. He longed to bring the saints up to a level of spirituality and understanding that would allow him to open everything up to them. Unfortunately he was never able to do so. Said he:

"It is my meditation all the day and more than my meat and drink to know how I shall make the Saints of God to comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge, before my mind.

"O how I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of, but poverty and the cares of the world prevent. But I am glad I have the privilege of communicating to you some things, which if grasped closely will be a help to you when the clouds are gathering, and the storms are ready to burst upon you like pearls of thunder. Lay hold of these things and let not your knees tremble, nor your hearts faint." (16 Apr. 1843; Joseph Smith Diary; Words of Joseph Smith, p. 196.)

Brigham Young recalled Joseph addressing this subject as follows:

"I recollect, in Far West, Joseph talking upon these matters, said: "The people cannot bear the revelations that the Lord had for them. There were a great many revelations if the people could bear them."(JD 18:242.)

Likewise John Taylor reminisced:

"No wonder that Joseph Smith should say that he felt himself shut up in a nutshell - there was no power of expansion; it was

difficult for him to reveal and communicate the things of God, because there was no place to receive them. What he had to communicate was so much more comprehensive, enlightened, it was difficult for him to speak; he felt fettered and bound, so to speak, in every move he made." (JD 10:148.)

Heber C. Kimball echoed the selfsame sentiments:

"There are quite a number of this congregation who knew Joseph Smith the Prophet, and he used to say in Nauvoo that when he came before the people he felt as though he were enclosed in an iron case, his mind was closed by the influences that were thrown around him; he was curtailed in his wishes and desires to do good; there was no room for him to expand, hence he could not make use of the revelations of God as he would have done; there was no room in the hearts of the people to receive the glorious truths of the Gospel that God revealed to him. I refer to these things to show that this feeling has been experienced by others as well as myself, and if as great and good a man as the Prophet Joseph felt like this, no wonder that I would be effected and be wrought upon by surrounding influences." (27 June 1863; JD 10:233-234.)

All this comes down to one main point: The Lord reveals doctrines and principles to the saints according to their spiritual capacity and willingness to accept and understand. Throughout the centuries, from Adam on down to the present, history is full of examples where the Lord, through his prophets, leads his people forward little by little. You can always tell the spiritual level of a people by seeing the doctrines and principles that are taught to them and by seeing how they react to them. What is the spiritual level of the saints today? What will history say concerning us in our current generation when it is finished?

After the death of Joseph Smith, President Young took the saints west, hoping to build a Zion in the desert and thereby achieve that which Joseph had hoped to accomplish, but could not. He taught many of the doctrines that Joseph could not openly teach during his lifetime. Plural marriage was introduced and many glorious doctrines were revealed to strengthen the saints and to give them hope. However, the saints did not live up to the laws and commandments given to them, and over the years, as they became interwoven with the gentiles again, they began to decline spiritually as they became more and more of the world. Finally these laws were repealed (taken away) because the saints were unworthy of them. Zion could have been built in the days of Joseph and Brigham had the Saints been willing.

George A. Smith points out that Brigham Young had the same problems with the saints that Joseph had. But Brigham still desired to bring the

people to a knowledge of God, and so instituted the laws of a Zion society and taught higher principles and doctrines that they might come to know God personally. But when he did, the saints refused to heed his counsels or believe his words. They would not let him teach them about God, nor about the eternities and he lamented because of their hardness. The doctrines and principles that President Young taught, he learned from Joseph Smith and from the Lord, said he:

"What I have received from the Lord, I have received by Joseph Smith; he was the instrument made use of. If I drop him, I must drop these principles; they have not been revealed, declared, or explained by any other man since the days of the Apostles."  
(JD 6:279.)

"From the first time I saw the Prophet Joseph I never lost a word that came from him concerning the kingdom. And this is the key of knowledge that I have today, that I did hearken to the words of Joseph, and treasure them up in my heart, laid them away, asking my Father in the name of His Son Jesus to bring them to my mind when needed." (6 June 1877; Deseret News.)

Brigham Young's mind was continually open to the visions of eternity and communion with the other side of the veil (JD 3:212). He knew of what he spoke just as sure as he knew he lived. Referring to the confidence he had in teaching what he taught he declared:

"I know just as well what to teach this people and just what to say to them and what to do in order to bring them into the celestial kingdom, as I know the road to my office. It is just as plain and easy. The Lord is in our midst. He teaches the people continually. I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call it scripture." (29 Jan. 1880; Deseret News; JD 13:95.)

"I say now when they (my sermons) are copied and approved by me they are as good as scripture as is couched in the Bible, and if you want to read revelation, read the sayings of him who knows the mind of God." (JD 13:264.)

"I am a witness that those are the revelations of the Lord through Joseph Smith, in this the last dispensation for the gathering of the people; and all who reject my testimony will go to hell, so sure as there is one, no matter whether it be hot or cold; they will incur the displeasure of the Father and of the Son."  
(JD 3:212.)

"Where is the divine who knows the least thing about the Being who is the Father of our spirits and the author of our bodies? I have had many revelations; I have seen and heard for myself and know these things are true, and nobody on earth can disprove them... What I know concerning God, concerning the earth, concerning government, I have received from the heavens, not alone through my natural ability, and I give God the glory and the praise." (JD 16:46.)

Brigham was sure of the source of his knowledge. As he endeavored to share his knowledge with others he found few who would believe him. Most people needed explanations based upon human reasoning before they could believe what he told them. Few indeed were the saints in tune with the Spirit sufficiently to have witness born to their souls of the truthfulness of what they were hearing. President Young stated:

"A declaratory statement is sufficient for those who are prepared to receive the spirit of revelation for themselves, but with most of the human family, we have to reason and explain. A really pure person is very scarce; but when the heart is truly pure, the Lord can write upon it, and the truth is received without argument, or doubt, or disputation." (Deseret News, 7 June 1873.)

President Young was a very holy, righteous man. Before Joseph's death, he (brother Young) had been sealed up to eternal life and had made his calling and election sure (see JD 12:103). This gave him, among other things, the privilege of conversing with those beyond the veil, as Apostle Cannon explained:

"The importance of our callings (as Apostles) was portrayed and our privileges were named. Among these were the privileges of having the ministration of angels, and of seeing the Savior Himself; of hearing the voice of God as audibly as we hear a man's voice; of continually being under the direction of the Holy Ghost; of being prophets and revelators." (George Q. Cannon Diary; Monday, 7 Oct. 1889.)

Brigham once commented "I know my heavenly Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and this is eternal life." (JD 4:218) Heber C. Kimball remarked that "He (Brigham) does right all the time. God is with him, angels are with him and round about him night and day. The wisdom of God is given to him, and it will supersede the wisdom of the world. I know this as well as I know that you are here this day" (JD 2:357). George A. Smith said that "If he was any better than he is, God would have to take him, or we would have to improve with the rapidity of lighting to keep up with him" (JD 2:367).

President Young was a man through whom revelation poured. He once stated that "If an Apostle magnifies his calling, he is the word of the Lord to this people all the time, or else he does not magnify his calling; - either one or the other. If he magnifies his calling, his words are the words of eternal life and salvation to those who hearken to them, just as much so as any written revelations contained in these books (Bible, Book of Mormon, D&C)." (JD 6:282.) Later he said:

"When I tell the truth, that is enough, and I care not whether those who hear it believe it or not, for that is their business... If we do not speak to you by the Spirit of revelation and the power of God, we do not magnify our calling. I think that I tell you the words of the Lord Almighty every time I rise here to speak to you... If I do not speak here by the power of God, if it is not revelation to you every time I speak to you here, I do not magnify my calling." (JD 9:140-141.)

So careful was the Prophet Brigham in his teachings, that Heber C. Kimball was led to say:

"Do you suppose that he (Brigham) is so unwise to say a thing which he does not know to be true? He understands what he speaks, and he looks before he jumps, and God Almighty will lead him straight, and he will never stumble - no, never, from this time forth." (JD 5:32.)

George Q. Cannon immediately recognized the great gift of revelation that Brigham Young possessed and was thus impressed to say:

"Talk about revelation! You go and read the sermons of President Young, and if you do not believe now that he was a Prophet, I think after you have read them you will be sure he was, because he talked as a Prophet to this people concerning their future, and his words were full of godlike wisdom, and he poured them out in a constant stream during his lifetime." (Gospel Truth; p. 328.)

Heber C. Kimball testified:

"Just think of your position; you have heard the teachings and instructions of President Young, and his instructions are the word of God to us, and I know that every man and woman in this Church who rejects his testimony, and the testimony of those that he sends, rejects the testimony of God his Father. I know that, just as well as I know that I see your faces today." (JD 4:2.)

Thus we see that President Brigham Young was filled with the spirit of revelation throughout his entire life. He gained his knowledge from Joseph Smith and from the Lord God Almighty. He continually basked in the light of restored truth and took advantage of every opportunity to share his inspired knowledge with others.

Even though Brigham Young labored with all his might to teach the people the doctrines of the kingdom that were necessary for their exaltation he met with extremely limited success. In later years he almost lamented having tried so hard to teach truth. Said he:

"You need exhorting rather than teaching. You have been taught doctrine in abundance, and I have sometimes thought it a pity the Lord has revealed quite as much as He has. And I can truly say that I believe, if I am guilty in any one point in my walk before this people, it is in telling them things they are not worthy of - that I have given unto them things that they could not receive." (JD 7:238.)

"And I will say, as I have said before, if guilt before my God and my brethren rests upon me in the least, it is in this one thing that I have revealed too much concerning God and His Kingdom, and the designs of our Father in Heaven. If my skirts are stained in the least with wrong, it is because I have been too free in telling who God is, how He lives, the nature of His provinces and designs in creating the world... in bringing the human family on the earth, His designs concerning them, etc. If I had, like Paul, said - "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant," perhaps it would have been better for the people." (Deseret News-27 June 1860.)

Upon the death of President Young the saints lost a tremendous source of knowledge. Not that the Lord would refuse to reveal truth to any who earnestly sought it but none were so free to share what they had received as was President Young. By their unwillingness to put forth the effort to gain personal revelation the saints proved themselves unworthy to receive more. This left them in the condition described by Nephi when he said:

"Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more! And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall. Wo be unto him who shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough! For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a

little and there a little; and blessed are those who harken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, we have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have." (2 Nephi 28:27-30.)

In essence the saints as a body were, and are saying exactly what Nephi here states; "We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!" Even though there were some individuals who remained true and faithful the majority of the saints were slothful or even out-right rebellious in their rejection of the teachings of President Young and therefore as Nephi explained, what they had received would be taken from them. Thus as the body of the saints became more interwoven with the gentiles they began to decline spiritually. They became more and more of the world. Finally the higher, celestial laws, doctrines, and principles that President Young had labored so hard to teach the people were repealed (denied) and taken from the saints. They entered once again into a spiritually fallen and degenerate world when they could have had a portion of the celestial world while yet in mortality.

Each of us as individuals are now in the same position as the saints in Brigham's day. We may either remain where we are in our fallen state or we may chose to put forth the effort to gain further light and knowledge and thereby raise ourselves and our families to a higher plain of spirituality. Insofar as the Lord will reveal to us individually and inasmuch as we are willing to obey Him and follow His instructions to us when He does reveal knowledge to us, we can become individually sanctified, piercing the veil and return again into His presence, while yet in this life.

The path is not an easy one to follow. The road is difficult and rocky. To those who diligently seek for understanding the Lord will reveal knowledge "line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." This process was plainly taught by Joseph Smith:

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel - you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation." (TPJS; p. 348.)

"Here, then, is eternal life - to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting

burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power." (TPJS; p. 346-347.)

President Young endorsed this same process, said he:

"For precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little. That is, He gives a little to His humble followers today, and if they improve upon it, tomorrow He will give them a little more, and the next day a little more. He does not add to that which they do not improve upon, but they are required to continually improve upon the knowledge they already possess, and thus obtain a store of wisdom. Still, there may be added to this, more power, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. It is the privilege of all Saints to grow and increase in understanding, and to spread abroad. If they receive a little, it is their privilege to improve upon that little, and so receive more, until they become perfect in the Lord - knowing and understanding perfectly His ways." (JD 2:2; 5:330.)

Through this process of personal revelation, many things are revealed to the faithful concerning the gospel, life, and of heaven itself. "As Saints in the last days we have much to learn; there is an eternity of knowledge before us; at most we receive but very little in this stage of our progression," said President Young (JD 3:354). Knowledge must be suited to our level of understanding or we will not understand, even though angels were to preach to us, "consequently the Lord has to descend to our capacities and give us a little here and a little there, line upon line, and precept upon precept, as the Prophet has said." (JD 3:354) The ability to ETERNALLY progress in knowledge and understanding "is inherent in the organization of all intelligent beings, so that we are capable of receiving and receiving, and receiving from the inexhaustible fountain of knowledge and truth." (JD 3:354.)

Progression in knowledge was not meant to be limited to the knowledge that is now generally held among the Latter-day Saints. We are to learn these things, it is true, but even greater "treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" will be unfolded to our understanding. Things that have been a mystery will cease to be such, for knowledge will take the place of ignorance. Indeed, there is "no such thing(s) as a mystery but to the ignorant." (JD 2:91.) The Lord has promised:

"But unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life." (D&C 63:23.)

Our goal is "everlasting life" and, therefore, we must have the "well of living water" which are the "mysteries of my Kingdom". Those saints who

keep the commandments will automatically receive of the mysteries - at least they will be worthy to receive of them if they will put forth the effort to read and study the many revelations which have already been given and then strive earnestly to receive more from the Lord.

In a person's search for truth and knowledge of heaven and of eternity, he must remember to not put his trust in the arm of flesh for answers. God can and will reveal unto us the truth, while man can and will deceive us. This does not mean that we will be deceived by all men through a premeditated plan on their part for surely much deception can be the result of ignorance. In order to avoid being deceived by men, either intentionally or out of ignorance, we must go to the fountain of all truth - to God himself - to gain the truth which we seek. As Nephi expressed:

"O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm. Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness." (2 Nephi 4:34-35.)

When a person gains revelation from the Lord he might be taught things that never before entered into his mind, perhaps even things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world. (See Alma 26:22; DC 76:5-10.) When this type of revelation is received it can be frightening and can cause a person to doubt what he has received. (See Isaiah 55:8-9.) He may be tempted to run to someone else whom is considered somewhat of an authority (man - woman or arm of flesh) upon the subject, or perhaps to someone from whom he can gain comfort or reassurance. The new knowledge is thus shared with others for whom it was not intended. All too often the opinions of these second parties are accepted as gospel truth rather than the revelation received, because what they say is not as frightening or as strange as what was received from the Lord. This should be totally avoided because it is impossible to live on borrowed light, a testimony cannot be based upon someone else's opinion. If God is to trust us with His revelations, we must learn that the highest form of obedience is to personal revelation. He is the highest source there is and for us to test our personal revelation on man is an offense to God. But, concerning those individuals who cannot believe what they receive from the Lord without confirmation received from some other mortal, Brigham Young wrote:

"Now those men, or those women, who know no more about the power of God, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, than to be led entirely by another person, suspending their own understanding, and pinning their faith upon another's sleeve,

will never be capable of entering into the celestial glory, to be crowned as they anticipated; they will never be capable of becoming Gods. They cannot rule themselves, to say nothing of ruling others, but they must be dictated to in every trifle, like a child." (JD 1:312.)

Very few of the saints who seek knowledge will go directly to the Lord for the answer. They would much rather rely upon the arm of flesh - for this, they suppose, will not fail them. George Q. Cannon wrote:

"The Lord designs that the principle of knowledge shall be developed in every heart, that all may stand before Him in the dignity of their manhood, doing understandingly what He requires of them, not depending upon nor being blindly led by their priests or leaders, as is the universal custom.

"If we, in our experience, have not yet proved the truth of the words of the Prophet - "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm" - probably we will do if we live long enough. There is a curse attending every man and woman who does this... We must all learn to depend upon God and upon Him alone. Why, the very man upon whom we think we can rely with unbounded confidence, and trust with all we possess, may disappoint us sometimes, but trust in God and He never fails... He is omnipotent, and in Him only can we trust under all circumstances, therefore we perceive why the Prophet has said - "Cursed is he that trusteth in man."" (JD 12:45-46)

President Joseph Fielding Smith has stated:

"Revelation is promised us through our faithfulness; so, also, is knowledge pertaining to the mysteries and government of the Church. The Lord withholds much that He would otherwise reveal if the members of the Church were prepared to receive it." (Doctrines of Salvation 1:283.)

"Why did Nephi say the Holy Ghost carries the message "unto" the hearts of men rather than saying "into" the hearts of men? (see 2 Nephi 33:1). Truths can only be OFFERED and their acceptance or rejection is a deliberate act taken by each individual." (The Book of mormon Gospel Doctrine Teachers Supplement p.36; Sunday School Course of Study.)

Thus the quest for Further Light and Knowledge is an individual quest and is undertaken at a customized pace suited for each individual. Men then become personally responsible for their reaction to the knowledge granted unto them and they stand alone before God, not man, as to their accountability to the knowledge accorded them. Every individual born into this

mortal existence whether man or woman, has the privilege and responsibility to seek the face of God and part the veil. Every individual has the responsibility of learning for himself through personal revelation the truths of eternity and how they apply to him or her in the process of exaltation. And, unfortunately, too many of us draw the line and dictate what God may and may not reveal about Himself and His kingdom. We, like the saints in the days of Moses or Christ, seal our fate by rejecting the word of the Lord and thus block our exaltation because of our unwillingness to be obedient to the truths revealed. Each will raise as high in the eternities as we are willing to accept truth or will sink as low as the level of rejection and disbelief we exhibit for the laws of God.