

Brigham Young University 1994–95

Speeches

What Came from Kirtland

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6 November 1994

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What Came from Kirtland

M. RUSSELL BALLARD

Sister Ballard and I appreciate, more than words can express, being here with all of you tonight. Please know of our love and concern for each one of you. It's a wonderful thing to reach across the footprint of the satellite and gather close to the young adults of the Church. I pray that the Lord will bless me that I may have his spirit with me tonight. I have worked hard on the preparation for what I'd like to say to you. If we have the spirit of the Lord with us, perhaps we will all learn something that is worthwhile.

During this past year I was privileged to have two special experiences that have affected me deeply. One was a leadership meeting in historic Kirtland, Ohio, with Church leaders from 109 stakes and districts and 24 missions in the northeastern United States and Canada. The other was being in Nauvoo and Carthage, Illinois, with President Howard W. Hunter and President Gordon B. Hinckley to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum. I cannot adequately express the depth of my feelings of love and gratitude to these great men.

As we visited Carthage Jail, where Joseph and Hyrum were murdered, and the beautiful

Smith Family Cemetery overlooking the wide Mississippi River where they are buried, I stood in reverential awe. I pay tribute to these noble brothers, my great-great-uncle Joseph and my great-great-grandfather Hyrum. I pay tribute to them for their faith and courage to sacrifice all they had, even their lives, by sealing their missions and their testimonies with their blood.

It is a blessing to know that Joseph and Hyrum, who "in life . . . were not divided, and in death . . . were not separated" (D&C 135:3), were instruments through whom the Lord restored his church in our day.

Tonight I would like to concentrate on the remarkable events of the Restoration that occurred in and near Kirtland, Ohio, where Joseph and Hyrum lived for seven years and where Joseph spent the majority of his adult life. It is often said that the Kirtland period is one of the least-understood periods in Church history. Kirtland is truly a holy ground of this

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dispensation. The Church basks in the light of revelation today to a great extent because of the great Pentecostal outpouring that Joseph and the Saints received in Kirtland.

The heavens literally opened to hundreds of our early Saints there. For many weeks surrounding the Kirtland Temple dedication, the Savior, past prophets, and angels communed directly with Joseph and Hyrum and other great leaders of our dispensation. Joseph prophesied that these Pentecostal events would “be handed down. . . to all generations” and that we should celebrate them as a “year of jubilee, and time of rejoicing” (HC 2:432–33).

It has been said that we may yet discover that Kirtland is our most significant Church history site. Let me describe to you how important Kirtland is to the Church. In Kirtland were revealed basically all of the priesthood offices that we have in the Church today. This was the schooling period for the leaders of the Church. About one-half of the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants were revealed there, far more than at any other location. There in Kirtland is where the School of the Prophets began. There is where Joseph made his Bible translation. There is where the Pearl of Great Price was largely translated. There is where the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was printed.

More heavenly manifestations occurred in Kirtland than in any other place. For example, in Kirtland the Father and the Son appeared or were seen in vision four times, and the Savior was seen at least six more times by Joseph Smith. In Kirtland is where significant keys were given. The Church headquartered in Kirtland longer than in anywhere else except Salt Lake City. We built our first temple and completed our first temple ordinances in Kirtland. Time allows me to review only four sacred spots that we visited one year ago this month.

We first visited the Whitney store, where about twenty sections of our Doctrine and

Covenants, including our Word of Wisdom, were received. This store served jointly as Joseph and Emma’s home as well as the Church Office Building from 1832–1834. It was our first bishops’ storehouse. I wish you could feel the same spirit we felt in that small School of the Prophets room in the Whitney store. It is just 11 feet x 14 feet in size. The heavens opened to about twenty men in that room as the words of the Lord authorized the organization of the First Presidency in our day. Many saw the Savior. Both the Father and Son were present as well as concourses of angels that day. I stood in the translating room (which is next to the School of the Prophets room) with three other stake and mission presidents whose forefathers were also in that same room with mine in 1832. We contemplated how our ancestors Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, Orson Hyde, Frederick G. Williams, and Newel K. Whitney felt as they watched Joseph dictate section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

The second place we visited was the Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio, just a few miles from Kirtland. In the revelation room of the Johnson home, the heavens opened and sixteen revelations came to the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was in that small room that God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon. They testified of Christ as they exclaimed,

This is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God.
[D&C 76:22–23]

We contemplated what it must have been like to have been one of the dozen men who were present in that room on that occasion and saw Joseph “in the midst of a magnificent glory.” Although they were not permitted to see the vision, they testified they “saw the glory and felt the power” (Philo Dibble,

“Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” *Juvenile Instructor* 27, 15 May 1892, pp. 303–4).

Our hearts were touched as we stood in Joseph and Emma’s small bedroom in the Johnson home and visualized twelve out of a mob of over fifty who burst into that bedroom and dragged Joseph from his bed on that cold night and carried him to the meadow, where they tarred and feathered him and without mercy beat him. All night the tar and feathers were removed. Joseph suffered great pain, and yet he preached to the crowd the next day and, after preaching, baptized three individuals. We stood in reverence on that same porch and pondered the power and strength of the Prophet Joseph.

At the third place we walked up the hill behind the Morley farm and stood in a grove of trees, contemplating the vision of the Father and the Son received by Joseph and two other brethren in the little log schoolhouse that used to stand there. Here Joseph ordained the first high priests in our dispensation. The adversary tried to prevent the ordinations that day. As Joseph cast the evil influence out, a great vision opened to him, and he exclaimed, “I now see God, and Jesus Christ at his right hand, let them kill me, I should not feel death as I am now” (“The Life of Levi Hancock,” copied from his own journal by Clara E. H. Lloyd, typescript, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, p. 33).

Wilford Woodruff recorded an experience in that little log schoolhouse as follows:

On Sunday night the Prophet called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house they had there. It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland, and who had gathered together to go off in Zion’s camp. . . . The Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. . . .

And a good many . . . bore their testimonies. When they got through the Prophet said, “Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it.” I was rather surprised. He said, “It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.” [CR, April 1898, p. 57]

Perhaps Joseph saw congregations of priesthood and faithful sisters assembled as we are tonight. It was in Kirtland that he prophesied that we would build temples in the Rocky Mountains (Wilford Woodruff, CR, April 1898, p. 57). Hyrum Smith also prophesied in Kirtland that the Saints would go to the Rocky Mountains (Lorenzo Dow Young, “Lorenzo Dow Young’s Narrative,” in *Fragments of Experience: Sixth Book of the Faith Promoting Series* [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882], p. 44).

On that beautiful Morley farm we read inspirational verses from thirteen sections of our Doctrine and Covenants that were given there. We considered what it would have been like to have been present as Joseph dictated those marvelous revelations from the Lord. Can you imagine the feeling the Saints experienced as Joseph dictated these words of the Savior: “I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God” (D&C 45:52) or “I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd” (D&C 50:44) or

Behold, I will go before you and be your rearward; and I will be in your midst, and you shall not be confounded.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, and I come quickly. [D&C 49:27–28]

Witnessing this rich outpouring of heavenly instruction in Kirtland bore an unwavering

witness to most of those early Saints of this: that the Lord Jesus Christ led this Church!

Finally, the fourth place was where we had the humbling and overwhelming experience of sitting in the Kirtland Temple, the site of some of the greatest spiritual events of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Can you imagine what it would have been like for the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery to see “the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son” (D&C 137:3) or to see “the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit” (D&C 110:2) and to hear him say, “Your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice” (D&C 110:5) or to witness the visit of seven prophets of past dispensations? Can you imagine their feelings on dedication day as they saw the apostle Peter come into the upper pulpits and sit between Joseph Smith, Sr., and Frederick G. Williams? The reality of this experience is captured by Heber C. Kimball as he described Peter in detail. He said Peter was “very tall . . . , [had] black eyes, white hair, and stoop[ed] shoulder[s]; his garment was whole, extending to near his ankles; on his feet he had sandals” (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], p. 91). Brother Kimball also recounted how John the Beloved appeared to several in the Kirtland Temple near the same time.

Can you imagine how the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery must have felt as Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to them and committed keys, dispensations, and sealing powers there—not unlike what occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration about two thousand years before.

In addition to these experiences, we reviewed some of the sixty-five revelations given in Ohio. I was reminded how boldly the Lord spoke. In section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord straightforwardly declared,

Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me

Search these commandments, for they are true . . . and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself. [D&C 1:24, 37–38]

Let me share with you some of the light and doctrine the Lord showered on the Church in Kirtland. These are the words of the Lord on just a few of our important doctrines.

1. On priesthood:

All they who receive this priesthood receive me. . . .

And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. [D&C 84:35, 37–38]

2. On obedience and keeping the commandments: “For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31) or “Entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean” (D&C 88:86) or

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]

3. On repentance: “He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven” (D&C 1:32).

4. On forgiving others: “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:10).

5. On prayer: “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you” (D&C 88:63) or “Pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place” (D&C 93:49) or also

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that

thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal. [D&C 42:61]

6. On pride versus humility: “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

7. On healing the sick:

And the elders of the church, two or more, shall be called, and shall pray for and lay their hands upon [the sick] in my name. . . .

. . . He that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed. [D&C 42:44, 48]

8. On fulfilling our callings:

Let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. [D&C 107:99–100]

9. On God’s love and closeness to us:

Ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath . . . prepared for you.

And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours. [D&C 78:17–18]

Almost all the doctrine and the principles of the gospel appear in the revelations received in and around Kirtland.

In Kirtland the Lord gave us perhaps the clearest and most concise definition of the gospel when he said,

This is the gospel. . . .

That [Jesus] came into the world . . . to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him. [D&C 76:40–42]

Think of the great charter of the Church Educational System that comes from Kirtland: “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36).

As we consider “light and truth,” let me review with you in more depth what some have termed our most significant revelation to man—section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which is often referred to as The Vision.

I believe that receiving this vision may have been one of the Prophet Joseph’s most powerful and significant spiritual experiences. As Joseph and Sidney Rigdon prayed to understand the resurrection of the just and the unjust, this glorious vision—or actually a series of six visions—burst upon them. Joseph and Sidney literally conversed with the Lord for about one and a half hours as the Savior showed them what Joseph later said was “Eternity sketch’d in a vision from God, of what was, and now is, and yet is to be” (*Times and Seasons* 4 [1 February 1843], p. 82). As it commenced, Joseph and Sidney viewed the glory of the Son on the right hand of the Father. They also beheld angels surrounding them. They were moved to exclaim, “He lives! For we saw him” (D&C 76:22–23).

They next saw Lucifer in the premortal world as he fell from the presence of God because of his rebellion. They then saw the sons of perdition and what will happen to them. Next they viewed visions of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms. They learned the requirements for attaining each of these kingdoms. They learned that those who qualify “shall dwell in the presence

of God and his Christ forever and ever” (D&C 76:62). They also perceived the differences in glory of these worlds. I wonder if in mortality we will ever fully realize the power and significance of this vision. Section 76 includes ten references to the conversations between the Savior and Joseph and Sidney. My dear young friends, can you imagine what you could learn if you spent one and a half hours in the presence of the Lord conversing with him and essentially having him conduct us on a guided tour of the premortal life, this earth life, and life after death? The knowledge Joseph received on the premortal existence has answered unnumbered gospel questions regarding the Council in Heaven and the creation of this world.

Joseph was commanded not to record everything that he saw in vision. As we look at his later teachings, we see what appear to be bits and pieces of this same great revelation being taught as the Saints were prepared to receive them. You see, the Prophet Joseph was not able to teach the Saints everything that he knew because they were not prepared. That is why education is constantly stressed by the Lord. That is why we encourage you to gain spiritual education by taking institute and religion classes. It is why we counsel you to read scriptures every day. It is why the Lord established the School of the Prophets. The Lord said we cannot be saved in ignorance. Can you see that this great vision described in section 76 was essentially a well from which Joseph drew pearls of knowledge throughout his life and taught the Saints as they were prepared to accept and to understand? Just think what we might be taught even today if we were prepared to receive it.

One of the key principles in section 76 is that in our pursuit of knowledge and understanding we can be taught individually through “the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Lord said that this blessing can come to each of us as we “love him, and purify [our]selves

before him” (D&C 76:116). I invite each of you to read section 76 with the spirit of wanting to understand what the Lord is teaching us.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to watch Joseph Smith receive these great revelations? He often had more than ten people in his presence. Many of these bore witness of the Spirit and the outward manifestations that were present as these revelations came to him. Typically they spoke of a whiteness or brightness that surrounded Joseph. For example, as section 76 was given, Philo Dibble wrote that Joseph “seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent” (“Early Scenes in Church History,” *Four Faith Promoting Classics* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 81). Orson Pratt was present when section 51 was received, and he testified that “Joseph’s face was exceedingly white, and seemed to shine” (*Millennial Star* 36 [11 August 1874], p. 498). Brigham Young testified,

Those who were acquainted with him knew when the Spirit of revelation was upon him, for his countenance wore an expression peculiar to himself while under that influence. He preached by the Spirit of revelation, and taught in his council by it, and those who were acquainted with him could discover it at once, for at such times there was a peculiar clearness and transparency in his face. [JD 9:89]

Many were impressed with how smoothly these revelations from the Lord flowed and how, except for minor corrections such as spelling or punctuation, they required no correcting. Parley P. Pratt said,

Each sentence was uttered slowly and very distinctly, and with a pause between each, sufficiently long for it to be recorded, by an ordinary writer, in long hand.

. . . There was never any hesitation, reviewing, or reading back, in order to keep the run of the subject;

neither did any of these communications undergo revisions, interlinings, or corrections. As he dictated them so they stood, so far as I have witnessed; and I was present to witness the dictation of several communications of several pages each. [PPP, 1985, p. 48]

Those who knew Joseph best were the most astonished at this process. It was beyond Joseph's natural ability and schooling to be able to dictate such revelations from God.

One of Joseph's companions, an educator, testified to this in amazement:

*I have known [Joseph and his scribe] to seat themselves, & without premeditation, . . . deliver off in broken sentences, some of the most sublime pieces of composition which I ever perused in any book. [William E. McLellin, *The Ensign of Liberty of the Church of Christ* 1, no. 7 (August 1849), pp. 98–99]*

Emma, the one who knew Joseph best, marveled that during the Book of Mormon translation, which occurred barely three years before most of the Kirtland revelations, Joseph "could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon" (or no doubt the Doctrine and Covenants or Pearl of Great Price). She then testified, "It is marvelous to me, 'a marvel and a wonder,' as much so as to anyone else" ("Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints Herald* 26, no. 19 [1 October 1879], p. 290).

Emma's testimony is similar to Parley Pratt's as she continued to be amazed at the process by which revelations came. She said in an interview near the end of her life,

I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, [Joseph] would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin

where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible. [Ibid.]

The revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were received through the power of God similar to the Book of Mormon translation.

My young brothers and sisters, can you sense how great a miracle it is that we have the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price? They are not man-made books but the literal word of God to us. As the Lord said,

These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you. [D&C 18:34–35]

It was often difficult for those in the 1830s to accept that the Lord spoke to them—as it is for many in our day, especially for those who call themselves intellectuals. It should not have been, but it was. One of the early "intellectuals" of the Church, William McLellin, was humbled when he decided to test Joseph Smith. He wanted some outward proof that these revelations came from God. He formulated in his mind five questions that he wanted answered that only the Lord and he would know. Without telling Joseph Smith the questions, he requested a revelation. We can read the result of this inquiry in section 66 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord gave this section in answer to these five questions that only McLellin and the Lord knew. It may be interesting for you to determine if you can discover what these five questions were. As Joseph dictated that revelation, McLellin got the confirmation he sought. He then recorded

his personal testimony of the divine calling of the Prophet Joseph. He said,

I now testify in the fear of God, that every question [was] answered to my full and entire satisfaction. I desired it for a testimony of Joseph's inspiration. And I to this day consider it to me an evidence which I cannot refute. [Ensign of Liberty, p. 61]

Joseph Smith is a true Prophet . . . of the Lord and . . . has power and does receive revelations from God. [Letter from William E. McLellin to relatives, 4 August 1832, RLDS Archives, p. 4]

In spite of this witness, McLellin left the Church.

There is a lesson to be learned from the study of the Doctrine and Covenants. Revelations are generally answers to questions. The Lord did not come and tap Joseph on the shoulder and say, “I have a revelation for you.” But instead Joseph went to the Lord and asked to receive an answer. Time after time Joseph tells us how he would ask and how, in response, the revelation would come. Elder Russell Nelson recently expanded on this important principle. He said, “The Lord can only teach an inquiring mind.” What an important lesson. The Lord doesn’t generally come to us—he waits for us to come to him and ask. Then he gives us the answer. How many times have you said, “I have not received direction lately” or “I feel a void in my life.” Do we inquire of the Lord? Do we ask, seek, and knock as the Savior directed? As you have problems and questions in your lives, do you follow this principle? I testify to you that as your minds are opened and as you truly inquire of the Lord, he will answer you. As we humble ourselves, he will lead us by the hand and give us answers to our prayers.

These early years in our history literally served as a refiner’s fire for early Church members. These were days of great testing when many failed the test. Leaders that survived

these early days—such as Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Heber C. Kimball—were perhaps thereby enabled to survive the almost insurmountable trials of crossing the plains and establishing the Church in the Rocky Mountains. I hope that we never forget the heritage that we have from these early days.

I also pay tribute to the faithful who followed the early leaders. Think of men like John Tanner. Brother Tanner was probably the equivalent of a millionaire in the 1830s—perhaps the wealthiest man in the whole Church. He sacrificed everything so that the Kirtland Temple could be built and the Church established. After laying all of his worldly goods on the altar, he left Kirtland for Missouri in poverty with a cart, a borrowed wagon, one horse of his own, three borrowed ones, and twenty dollars in cash. When he had spent his few dollars, he begged for buttermilk and other food to sustain his family of eleven. One of his cherished daughters died during the exodus from Kirtland. Apostates taunted John Tanner because he remained faithful. His response echoed the feelings of these early faithful Saints. He said, “Well, if others have come up easier, they have not learned so much” (John Tanner, “Sketch of an Elder’s Life,” in *Scraps of Biography* [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883], p. 15).

Consider also the example of Artemus Millet. In 1832 the Church faced a real dilemma. A stonemason was needed to direct the stonework on the Kirtland Temple. No one was qualified. Lorenzo Young suggested that they recruit Artemus Millet, who was a capable stonemason living in Canada. But there was one problem—Artemus was not a member of the Church. Joseph Smith paused and considered the suggestion. He then turned to Brigham Young and said, “I give you a mission to go to Canada and baptize Brother Artemus Millet and bring him here.” If that wasn’t enough, he then said, “And tell him to bring a

thousand dollars with him” (Millet Family History, “A Brief History of Artemus Millet,” manuscript, LDS Archives, pp. 70–71). You prospective and returned missionaries, how would you like to receive such a mission assignment? With the help of the Lord, Brigham Young went to Canada and taught and baptized Brother Millet. When he was asked to leave Canada to supervise the work on the Kirtland Temple, Brother Millet responded that he had a business in Canada and if he left, not only would the business fail, but people who owed him money would never pay their debts to him. Being touched by the Spirit, Brother Millet left his business and moved to Kirtland, Ohio.

The stately Kirtland Temple is in a large part a monument to Artemus Millet. He lost his business. He lost his money. He lost his prestigious standing in Canada. Later his wife died. But look what he gained. He gained the gospel. He fulfilled an important earthly mission. He gained an eternal family, and today there are thousands of his descendants in the Church who call him blessed. I know some of his descendants who are leaders in this Church and who acknowledge that much of what they count dear in their lives is because of their faithful forefathers in following the prophet of God.

My dear brothers and sisters, can you see the importance of the Kirtland period that we have discussed tonight? As I conclude, may I share with you a never-to-be-forgotten experience I had in presiding at a sacrament meeting in the Kirtland Temple. President Wallace B. Smith of the RLDS Church graciously granted permission for us to hold a sacrament meeting in the temple. Not since the 1840s had the sacrament been blessed and passed to Latter-day Saints. We felt a power and a spirit there that may have been comparable to that felt in some of those meetings in the 1830s. When the General Authorities blessed and passed the sacrament, the Lord poured out his Spirit upon

all those in attendance. These leaders today are also giving their all to build the Church in our day. The Lord blessed us with spiritual power and renewed testimonies of this work. While singing “The Spirit of God,” that great hymn written for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, all in attendance had feelings that will never be forgotten. Most all were wiping away the tears streaming down their cheeks. We were aware on that occasion of how close those on the other side of the veil are to us.

Now, my beloved young people, we love you. You have a great destiny in this Church. Study the scriptures. Study the revelations. Anchor your hearts to the great message of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As you do this, I promise you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by and through the authority of the holy apostleship invested in me, that you will come to know the Lord, and the more you come to know him the easier your life will become. That may sound strange to you, but as an apostle, I walk the face of the earth, going wherever I am sent, and I know of the power of the Lord to bless his Saints. Sister Ballard and I will leave on Thursday for Brazil. It does not matter where we are. Those who have an unwavering testimony that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God know that he, in fact, received revelation from God. They know that those revelations contain all the instruction necessary for us to find peace and happiness in this life. Understand the gospel and keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will prosper.

I testify to you that Jesus Christ lives. He is the Son of God. This is his Church. He has spoken to his prophets. He speaks today. He is guiding the affairs of the kingdom. God bless you to keep your eyes riveted on the leadership of the Church. We will not lead you astray. We cannot. This is my witness and my testimony, and my blessing upon you: that the peace of the Lord will be yours now and always; that you’ll find it easy all the days of

your life to follow the simple, beautiful teachings that are ours in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the words of the living prophets. May God grant you the strength and the courage to understand that, and live all the days of your lives by the teachings found in

the scriptures. I thank you for who you are and all that you mean to your families and to this Church. You are precious. You are important. You have a great destiny to carry on this glorious work. May you always be worthy, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.