

# *The Gospel Has Been Restored*

WILLIAM GRANT BANGERTER

President Oaks and my dear brethren and sisters, since the beginning of this meeting I have been feeling what an honor it is to participate in the award that was just given to Dr. Harvey Fletcher. Over most of the years of my life, he has been one of the living legends about which we have heard; and today, for the first time, I had the privilege of making his acquaintance. I would like to say that Dr. Fletcher is undoubtedly one of the great scientists of the world, and certainly one of the greatest among the members of the Church.

President Oaks neglected—maybe it did not get on the record—to mention the fact that I also attended Brigham Young University, so I feel that I belong here just as much as any of the rest of you. Maybe I did not achieve as Dr. Fletcher did in his first science course, but I hope that someday or another I can be a participant with you.

I talked yesterday with my dentist, who said, “Imagine that Marriott Center where you’re going to speak. All we had was the George Albert Smith Fieldhouse when I attended BYU.”

And I asked, “Have you ever heard of College Hall?” I do not suppose many of you have either. Probably Dr. Fletcher can remember well before College Hall.

It was suggested—I suppose others have thought of it before—that the title for my remarks today, in view of your coming examinations, should be, “If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear” (see D&C 38:30). I have, in fact, thought to speak about something connected with the opening hymn, “Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning.” I want to say something about the restoration of the gospel.

In the Church we have really only one basic subject to talk about. Everything hinges on the fact that the gospel has been restored. I know that all of us understand about the Restoration, but we do not always remember all of its implications. This has to be the greatest news event since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is more important by far than world wars or atom bombs. It is more far-reaching than space flight or men on Mars. There is something in it that the whole world must hear.

As we proclaim and teach and remind both members and those not in the Church of this

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*William Grant Bangerter was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 10 April 1979.*

message, we wonder why people do not pay more attention if it is all that important—perhaps we do not tell it right. One good reason, of course, why people do not pay attention is that most of the people in the world have not heard about it yet. Very few of those not of the Church understand about the Restoration, for various reasons. First of all, they are probably not too interested; second, the Restoration offends their traditions; third, obedience to the gospel would upset their plans and interests. And so, most people act as if they would rather that it had not happened. I spoke of the Restoration one day to a minister of another faith, and answered all his questions in a friendly discussion; and after he had taken a day or two to reflect on what I had told him, he told me with considerable warmth, “I think that what you teach is a very dangerous heresy.” Possibly I had done a poor job of explaining, but, you see, he really did not want the gospel to be restored.

Some of the members of the Church do not pay much attention either. Their reasons may be that the Church requires too much of their time and effort, or that keeping the commandments would spoil their lifestyle. Many people simply do not want to be that deeply involved or to make firm commitments.

Still, as we all know, it really has happened and it is true. Such earthshaking events come so rarely that people tend to quickly forget the reality of them. A most unusual demonstration of this attitude is found in the book of Third Nephi. The prophecy had been given that the birth of the Savior would be signified by a period of a day, a night, and a day without darkness; and, as the time approached, those who did not believe and who did not want it to happen began to threaten those who were watching for the sign. You can imagine the feelings of the believers as they waited and waited and wondered if perhaps it would not come after all. But it came. Everything predicted in

relation to the Savior will come and has to come.

Then, at the time of the crucifixion of the Savior, nearly every one of those who had heard about it on the American continent had forgotten the first wonderful sign of the day and the night and the day, and they ignored the threat of the other and more terrible sign that had been predicted. Certainly, they thought, it would not really happen; such things do not happen in this world, you know. But it happened. “And it came to pas in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land” (3 Nephi 8:5). Before the trouble was over, it did not matter anymore about the warning; those who had not listened were gone.

The implications for us of the restoration of the gospel are as follows: first, we can really know that God lives; second, the gospel will guide us to a richer, happier, more purposeful life on earth; third, we can know that God watches over us; and fourth, we have assurances that we will live again after death and renew our association with those loved ones we have lost. We have received the promise of a life so rich and happy that its wonders have only been hinted at. Let me give you this example from the 76<sup>th</sup> section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

*They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—*

*They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory;*

*And are priests of the Most High, . . .*

*Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether . . . things present, or things to come. . . .*

*These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever. [D&C 76:55–57, 59, 62]*

Maybe there are some people who do not want that to happen either.

We are expected to spread the news. We must see to it that other people understand and believe; our own blessings depend on how well we take the gospel to the world. Everybody must hear about it. As the Lord said in his preface to the Book of Commandments, or the Doctrine and Covenants:

*For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.*

*And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.*

*And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days. [D&C 1:2–4]*

All of us here in the Church are the disciples spoken of, and we ought to improve our method for spreading the gospel. Most of us could be better examples and make the news more easily received. We really do not need to learn better ways of teaching, and we must increase our ability to announce the news.

Here are some examples of what the gospel really means to people on the earth. I would like to speak about some of this without making reference to the written text, but by drawing upon your recollection. You may, for example, remember something of the story of Adam and Eve when they were cast out of the Garden of Eden and, in that sad circumstance, wondered what would become of them. You can imagine that they had enjoyed the fullness of the blessings of a rich and wonderful life in the actual presence of their Father in Heaven; and now, because of transgression, they were cast out and had nowhere to go.

They were told to go to work and to do what they had to do, and doggedly they went about their task. If you read carefully in the fifth chapter of the book of Moses you will see that they went through a long trial. They began

to have children—not the children you hear about, Cain and Abel and Seth, but other children before those. These children grew up, and they began to pair off and have children and multiply in the land. So Adam and Eve were now grandparents, and they were still struggling in an almost hopeless circumstance. “What are we here for now? We’ve lost it all. Where can we go?”

One day, as Adam was out offering a sacrifice, which he did because he had been told to, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and asked, “Adam, what are you doing?”

And Adam replied, “I’m offering a sacrifice unto the Lord.”

“Why are you doing that, Adam?”

[He said,] *I know not, save the Lord commanded me.*

*And the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father. . . .*

*. . . And thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore. [Moses 5:6–8]*

And from that moment the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God, fell upon Adam, and a revelation was given to him as to the purpose of life and the purpose of the Son of God in bringing him a redemption whereby he really could, along with his wife, return to that blessed circumstance that he had lost. Imagine the joy with which he returned and told his wife, and how she rejoiced as she said, “I see it all now. There was a purpose in it. Thanks even for our transgression because it brought about the things that we now can enjoy as the greatest gifts in life.” (See Moses 5:1–11.)

There are other stories. My wife happens to be related to the family of Jacob Hamblin, and those who have worked with me over the years know that I have a particular feeling for this man’s story. His name, I suppose, is known to most members of the Church, and he had a particular ability to express his feelings and the

motivating power of faith that touched his life. I would like to rehearse just a little of what the gospel meant to him.

He said that he first heard of the gospel when he was living on the frontiers of Wisconsin. He heard through a friend or a neighbor that there were preachers in the area who were proclaiming that the gospel had been restored and that it was the privilege of every man to find out for himself through the Spirit if it was true. Jacob did not understand much about what that meant, but the feeling so fired his mind that he could hardly wait to hear this news that the gospel had been restored. He found the missionaries holding a meeting in a house. He had arrived after the meeting had begun, but as he listened to the message, he felt, "This is what I've been searching for, what I need more than anything in life. How can I know if it's true?"

As if he had asked the question aloud, the elder stood up again and said, "If there's anyone here who would like to know the truth of what we have just told you, we promise you that if you'll be baptized by immersion and receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost the Lord will reveal it to you."

And Jacob said, "That's good enough for me. I'll do that, even though it costs the sacrifice of everything I have."

He went home and told his wife. She said, "Oh, yes, that's just what it will cost you. I won't live with you any more if you join that church."

His father and his brother said, "Jacob, what's the matter with you? Don't you know that those are the Mormons? It's one thing to get religion, but why did you have to choose the worst one there is?"

But he still had that independence of spirit and, having made arrangements to be baptized, he proceeded to meet the elders. He later said that on his way to be baptized he began to reflect on what the sacrifice would mean, and it seemed to him almost too much to bear; he was

soon on the point of turning back. (That is a good thing for missionaries to remember, that this wavering happens to most people as they are about to join the Church.) but, he said, as he was about to turn back, he felt the presence of someone near him. He realized that it was his dead grandfather, and he heard a voice say, "Go forward, my son. You cannot comprehend the joy that will come into your life as a consequence of what you are about to do today." Thus fortified, he went forward and met the elders and was baptized into the Church.

As the elders confirmed him a member of the Church, one of them said, "The spirits in prison have greatly rejoiced over what you have done." Jacob did not understand that, but he told them of his experience with his grandfather on the way. They then explained to him the great work of salvation for the dead, and suddenly he knew why he had joined the Church—not just to satisfy his own interest and curiosity, but to become an instrument in the hand of the Lord to bring the same joy and privilege and blessing to the lives of many other people.

He returned and told his family what he had done. Evidently they said worse things than they had said before, but now, he said, "I just laughed at them and I told my father, 'Never mind; within two years I'll baptize you in the Church, too.'"

Well, they all followed him, and they went through the turmoils and the trials of the days of Nauvoo. After the death of the Prophet and the exodus, they followed him across Iowa and across the plains. In the process his wife did leave him, and his mother died along the way. The rest of the family settled in Tooele, and then were called to go to what must have seemed the very end of the earth down in southern Utah, at that time a desolate desert inhabited by what Jacob thought were the most lowly people he had ever seen on the face of the earth. While they were living there, his father died in their little hut, and just before his death he called

Jacob to him and said something like this: “Jacob, you know that you have been as a Joseph to your family. Like Joseph who was sold into Egypt, you have brought salvation to your family. Thanks for your persistence and faithfulness. Thanks, Jacob, for all these blessings.”

Does that sound a little strange to you? For what blessing could he possibly be thankful, down there in the desert dying under miserable circumstances? “Thanks for all these blessings, Jacob.” Well, he knew of what he talked. He thought of the gospel that had been restored, and he said, “There’s no use to pray for me that I stay here longer. I know the gospel. It’s time for me to go where I’ll be happier. Thanks for those great blessings.”

There is a story about Abraham—there are many stories, I guess, about Abraham, but if you read this one in the first chapter of the book of Abraham, you will recognize that he did not always know the gospel and that it came to him with great impact and power. He said, in effect, “I knew that men before me had possessed gifts and powers that I didn’t have, and so I found it necessary to change my place of residence. I decided to move from Ur in Chaldea up to Haran [which is now in Turkey], because when I get up there they have promised me a good job—I’ll make fifty thousand dollars a year, I’ll get a beautiful home, they’ll give me a car and a boat and a camper and three months’ vacation and all the medical benefits . . .”—I guess some of you have not read that part. He actually said it a little bit differently. (See Abraham 1:1–2.)

Some of you, in a few days or weeks, may move from Provo to Chicago or Denver or Cleveland, and you will have in mind some of those things—and properly so, perhaps—such as the car, the job, the boat, and some of the other nice things of life. What Abraham really said was:

[Knowing about those blessings that others have had before me,] *I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge . . . and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace.*  
[Abraham 1:2]

You can see that Abraham was not content to play for those little things. He wanted to own the whole kingdom; that is what he was after. But he did not get it all at once. He knew it would take a little time—fifty, sixty, or eighty years—I am not sure just how long it took him. But it says further, in Hebrews:

*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. . . .*

*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country. . . .*

*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . .*

*[He] died in faith, not having received [yet] the promises, but having seen them afar off, and [was] persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that [he was a stranger and a pilgrim upon] the earth. [Hebrews 11:8–10, 13]*

Now what is it like in the world among people who do not have the gospel? Let me read a recent article.

*If any skeptics remain, let them go anywhere in the city and stop and look around. For example, on the back road leading to the University, one can see regally attired equestrians on one side, while on the other motorcycles, dune buggies, and all-terrain vehicles skitter across the hills like jackrabbits. Near the institute, on a bluff overlooking the golf course—vroom!—a single engine plane jounces across a field and takes off with a glider in tow. Even more of a spectacle are the hang gliders soaring off the same cliff as the sailplanes, while far below, as far as the*

*eye can see, surfboarders ride the rollers and strings of joggers take in the stunning scenery, which includes a group of nudists playing soccer. There is no escaping the sports scene. Plunge into the translucent waters off the point and there seem to be as many skin and scuba divers as fish. On weekends when the Pro teams are not at home the stadium is shared by drag-strippers and wheelchair races. The catalogue goes on and on: stock-car races, go-karting, sky diving, ballooning, 21 sports-car clubs, 350 yacht races, 1,500 bowling leagues. Living here is like being on an eternal vacation. ["Sports Town," Sports Illustrated, December 25, 1978, p. 50]*

Contrary to what you may think, I am not opposed to recreation; but you get the feeling out of that article that the perspective of life is gone, and that some people seem to be literally hell-bent for fun. If the article had been talking about Utah it probably would have included the skiing, and the hunting with campers and four-wheel-drive vehicles, and other things for which we do not always have all that much time. Life need not be less exciting when you are a faithful member of the Church, but it is not what you see in the movies and on television.

Members of the Church are a called people. We were sent here for a purpose; we are committed and dedicated. You who have served as missionaries are slowly finding out that the mission term was not for just two years, as you thought it was. You are enlisted "for the duration." You may not all understand that phrase; but back in the years of the Second World War, when we were being called up and enlisted, they did not tell us when we would get out. They just said, "For the duration—and six months." That is how long you are enlisted in the gospel. We can act like the people of the world if we want to, taking the toys and the cake and the candy, but we will miss out on the really great prize. Remember, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39).

As members of the Church, there are things you cannot do. For one, you cannot take a "Las Vegas"-style vacation. I do not know whether you all knew that. You cannot gamble, bet on the horses, or play with playing cards. You cannot be "loose," immoral, or violent. Even though the world wants you all—all you men, at least—to imitate the "Marlborough Man" and to be "macho," those attitudes simply do not belong to you. They do not demonstrate Christlike qualities.

You cannot be dishonest. You cannot take immoral liberties in dating or other associations—if you do you should be excommunicated from the Church. You have no excuse. You are bright young people and you know better. You can do as you please, of course, but remember that the Lord's free agency is just like the Army's. We used to hear soldiers argue that the Army could not make anyone do anything he did not want to do, but there was always some wise old head who would quickly point out, "No, they can't make you do it, but they can sure make you wish you had." The Lord operates on a rather similar principle.

Now, what *can* you do—in fact, what *must* you do as a member of the Church? You must love everybody. Yes, take it literally—and you must especially love your wife or husband. Quite a few older people in the Church forget that. You must be true, go to church, give unstinting service, go on a mission, go to the temple, and pay your tithing. Why must you do all these things? Because when you understand all, you will see that it is worth it. You would really rather live that way if you knew all the perspectives.

In your daily work, you must have an occupation that contributes to the benefit of humanity and over which you can ask the blessings of the Lord from day to day. Anything else would be unworthy.

You are committed to be a conservationist in its true sense. We have no right to squander the earth's blessings. Learn not to waste food,

energy, or gasoline. My father used to tell the story about the man who bought a pig for five dollars in the spring and sold him for five dollars in the fall. When he was asked how he made money that way, he said, "Well, I didn't make much on the transaction, but I had the use of the pig all summer."

Perhaps not all of you understand that. Such days are a little in the past, but a friend of mine once put it this way: "If I were eating an apple and didn't want to finish it, I wasn't allowed to throw it away; I had to find a chicken or a pig or something to give it to so that I wouldn't waste it." Thrift is an ancient virtue that still needs to be cultivated in our time.

Many potent examples show how people must still learn to think correctly. I have a friend who, after he was married in the temple, drifted away from the Church. He was an airline pilot. As time went on, one of his companions, who was also a member of the Church, said, "Look, friend, you're not helping me any. I used to live like you, but I've changed. I'm in the bishopric now, and everything I do to try to build up the Church you tear down. I want you to change."

Because my friend respected this man, he began to change his ways, went back to church, and began to become active. He said, however, that he still had one vice: he liked to gamble. He played cards with the other pilots when he was away from home, and he was good at it. He hated to give it up because he won quite a bit of money; but, he said, "One day as I went to pay my tithing, I thought, 'Let's see—how do I pay tithing on this money I won gambling?'" That solved the problem for him.

Other such questions are solved by straight thinking. My father often met the test that farmers generally undergo of "whether I should haul my hay on Sunday because it's about to rain." That was quite a test once upon a time. My father answered it by saying, "Let it

rain. I don't care if it rains on the hay; I don't have to eat hay."

What if we do not want to keep the commandments? Brother Elray Christiansen used to tell of a man who came over from Denmark who was skilled at amassing wealth. He gave up a rather substantial fortune to join the Church and come to Utah, but after he settled here he again had the ability to build up his resources. In the process he lost his testimony. As the brethren visited him, they would say, "You're not doing right, you know," but he would never listen.

One day two brethren were visiting and one of them said, "Now look, Lars, it's not right what you do." He paid no attention. The brother continued, "Look, Lars, you can't take it with you, you know."

That touched Lars, and he said, "What's that you say?"

"I told you, you can't take it with you."

And Lars said, "*Vell* then, I *vill* not go."

Brother Christiansen bore testimony that he has gone.

Recently we heard of the death of Nelson Rockefeller, who was one of the wealthiest men in the world, and my son asked me how much he had left. The standard answer, of course, is that he left it all, as all will do.

In closing, there is a story told by President Kimball. I wish I had it here to quote verbatim, but I shall have to do it from memory and pray that I will not mutilate it too much. He said, in substance, "I went to visit a friend. He met me at the airport. 'How do you like my car?' he said as he showed me his luxurious limousine. On the way from the airport to his home, he stopped the car, we got out, and he said, 'See all this? From the mountains on the right hand over to the river on the left—it's all mine.'" The way Brother Kimball said "mine" made you feel the covetousness that man had in his possessions. Then they proceeded to his home, which was truly a palace. President Kimball said, "I spoke at his funeral not long ago. They

buried him in a piece of land the length of a tall man and the width of a heavy man, and as I returned from the cemetery I observed the cattle in the field, seemingly unaware that there had been a change of ownership."

I ask you, do you understand that story? Is there anyone five years old who cannot understand it? It is as plain as day what life is all about. That is why we have the gospel with us; that is why it has been restored. That is why we are called upon to give service and to bring

forth fruit as those who know the truth and know the difference between right and wrong.

I give you my testimony that I know that the gospel is true, that it has been restored, and that this knowledge supersedes in importance every other thing that has been told to us in all the years of our lives. It takes precedence over all the other projects and activities that people anywhere may want to do. I pray that we will be faithful and true to what that implies for all of us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.