

ciple that each of us is known and loved by God.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell was coming to New York City for some Church business, and we were informed that he would also like to have a mission conference. We were so pleased to have this opportunity to hear from one of the Lord's chosen servants. I was asked to select one of our missionaries to provide the opening prayer for the meeting. I might have randomly picked one of the missionaries to pray, but felt to ponder and prayerfully select one whom the Lord would have me ask. In going through the missionary roster, a name boldly stood out to me: Elder Joseph Appiah of Accra, Ghana. He was the one I felt the Lord wanted to pray at the meeting.

Prior to the mission conference, I was having a regularly scheduled interview with Elder Appiah and told him of the prompting that I had received for him to pray. With amazement and humility in his eyes, he began to weep deeply. Somewhat surprised by his reaction, I started to tell him that it was all right and he wouldn't have to pray, when he informed me he would love to offer the prayer, that his emotion was caused by the love he has for Elder Maxwell. He told me that this Apostle is very special to the Saints in

Ghana and to his own family. Elder Maxwell had called his father to be the district president in Accra and had sealed his mother and father in the Salt Lake Temple.

Now, I didn't know any of what I just related about this missionary or his family, but the Lord did and inspired a mission president on behalf of *one* missionary to provide a lifelong memory and testimony-building experience.

At the meeting, Elder Appiah offered a wonderful prayer and made a humble contribution to a meeting where Elder Maxwell taught the missionaries of the attributes of Jesus Christ. All who were there will never forget the feelings of love they experienced for their Savior.

### **Come to the Savior one by one**

I have a testimony in my heart, brothers and sisters, that God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ know and love us individually. I'm not sure I fully understand how; I just know and have experienced that They do. I urge all of us in our own ministries—to our families and to our fellowman—to embrace the Savior's warm invitation to come unto Him, one by one, and be perfected in Him.

I share this witness and hope, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## **Elder Douglas L. Callister**

### **Seeking the Spirit—an urgent quest**

In Italy there is a majestic sculpture of Moses with a crack on one of the knees. A tour guide may say that Michelangelo, viewing the masterpiece, hurled a chisel at the sculpture and exclaimed in disdain, "Why doesn't it speak?"

Unlike the inanimate stone, the true Church of Jesus Christ is filled with life.

The voice, Spirit, and power of God are found in our worship services or whenever the ordinances of the holy priesthood are administered.

Elijah inquired of Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee." Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."<sup>1</sup> He could not have asked for anything greater.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith has written: "The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth. . . . Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten."<sup>2</sup>

With our confirmation as Church members, the door is opened for us to pursue this heavenly endowment. This should be an urgent and lifelong quest.

### **Spirit makes us more observant of beauty**

As we become more conversant with the Holy Spirit, our lives become refined. The sordid and base have no attraction. It is developed spirituality which separates us from the secular world.

A spiritually-minded man is observant of the beauty in the world around him. As the earth was organized, the Lord saw that "it was good." Then "it was very good."<sup>3</sup> It pleases our Father in Heaven when we, also, pause to note the beauty of our environment, which we will naturally do as we become more spiritually sensitive. Our awareness of grand music, literature, and sublime art is often a natural product of spiritual maturity. In poetic allusion to the theophany of Moses and the burning bush, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Earth's crammed with heaven, / And every common bush afire with God; / And only he who sees takes off his shoes."<sup>4</sup>

### **Spirit enhances our scripture reading**

As we seek the Spirit, our scripture reading becomes more reflective. We rediscover the virtue of slow reading. There is more reading aloud, as perhaps the scriptures were meant to be read. Brigham Young said: "All I have to do is . . . keep my spirit, feelings and conscience like a sheet of blank paper, and let the spirit and power of God write upon it what he pleases. When he writes, I will read; but if I read before he writes, I am very likely to be wrong."<sup>5</sup>

As an evidence of increased spirituality, we become more selective in what we read. J. Reuben Clark said, "My rule now is, never read anything that is not worth remembering."<sup>6</sup> Thomas Jefferson always read something ennobling just before he retired, "whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep."<sup>7</sup>

### **Spirit helps us have improved prayer**

Another fruit of spiritual maturity is improved prayer. More than 30 years ago, President Kimball called me to serve as a stake president. At the conclusion of a long conference weekend, I inquired if he had counsel for me. He replied, "Go teach the Latter-day Saints how to pray. As a people we must not forget how to commune with our Heavenly Father. That is all." Most of the profound and important teachings in the Church are simple.

### **Become supremely spiritual beings**

Those who have made it their quest to realize the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit will awaken in the next life as spiritual giants, in contrast to the infancy of others who have lived without God in this world.

One of the spiritually advanced was President Joseph F. Smith. A member of the Twelve said of him: "Spiritually, he was the most high-minded of any man I ever met. I visited the Tabernacle where President Smith blessed the Latter-day Saints. For 20 minutes he blessed them. For 20 minutes there was not a dry eye in the Tabernacle."<sup>8</sup>

Bishop Charles W. Nibley said at the passing of Joseph F. Smith:

"Never was man more moral and chaste and virtuous to the last fiber of his being than he. Against all forms or thoughts of licentiousness, he was set, and as immovable as a mountain."<sup>9</sup>

"As a preacher of righteousness, who could compare with him? He was the greatest that I ever heard—strong, pow-

erful, clear, appealing. It was marvelous how the words of living light and fire flowed from him. . . . [When] the heart of President Smith was attuned to the Celestial melodies—he could hear, and [he] did hear.”<sup>10</sup>

Another who developed this great talent of spirituality was President David O. McKay, causing Elder Bryant S. Hinckley to write, “David O. McKay has done many good things and said many beautiful things but somehow he is finer than anything he has ever said or done.”<sup>11</sup>

The great battle of our premortal estate was a struggle for individual souls. It is the same battle we wage here, which is to become supremely spiritual beings. President McKay said, “Spirituality is the consciousness of victory over self.”<sup>12</sup> It is the sure knowledge that we are winning the struggle for the soul. Sensuality is the realm of self-indulgence. Spirituality is the realm of self-victory.

### Keep covenants and seek the Spirit

I attended a Church class in which the instructor asked what counsel we would give our children in the closing moments of life. I answered, “First, keep your covenants. God keeps His. It will mean much to stand before your Father in Heaven and report: ‘I am home. I am clean. I have done all I covenanted to do.’”

Second, seek the Spirit of God. The scriptures plead: “Quench not the Spirit.”<sup>13</sup> “Grieve not the . . . Spirit.”<sup>14</sup> It will not come to impure hearts or minds. It comes quietly and without drama. A listening ear can hear the faint rustle of a wing. If we do not listen, it will leave.

I testify that the workings of the Spirit are real and are found in this Church. I also testify of Christ, the Redeemer, and the work He has instituted in this dispensation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. 2 Kings 2:9.
2. “The Sin against the Holy Ghost,” *Instructor*, Oct. 1935, 431.
3. Genesis 1:4, 31.
4. *Aurora Leigh*, 7:821–23.
5. *Deseret News Weekly*, 19 Apr. 1871, 125.
6. Quoted by Joseph L. Wirthlin, in Conference Report, Apr. 1947, 85.
7. *The Best Letters of Thomas Jefferson*, sel. J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton (1926), 227.
8. Personal conversation with Elder LeGrand Richards on 1 July 1978.
9. Quoted in Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 524–25.
10. *Gospel Doctrine*, 522.
11. “Greatness in Men—David O. McKay,” *Improvement Era*, May 1932, 446.
12. *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 390.
13. 1 Thessalonians 5:19.
14. Ephesians 4:30.

## Elder Dallin H. Oaks

### The challenge to become

The Apostle Paul taught that the Lord’s teachings and teachers were given that we may all attain “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). This process requires far more

than acquiring knowledge. It is not even enough for us to be *convinced* of the gospel; we must act and think so that we are *converted* by it. In contrast to the institutions of the world, which teach us to *know* something, the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to *become* something.