

# Seeing with New Eyes

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When I walk to campus, my route takes me along the front of Heritage Halls. There, underneath some shady trees, the sidewalk runs along an irrigation canal, a relic perhaps of an earlier era when orchards rather than buildings graced the area. One day while walking next to the canal, I was rapt in thought about the pollination of the little aquatic plant *Zannichellia palustris*. How does the pollen move through water?

I had been studying populations of the plant at Fish Springs in the west desert, about a three-hour drive from Provo. “Wouldn’t it be grand if *Zannichellia palustris* grew right here in this ditch?” I thought to myself. I glanced toward the canal and there it was—*Zannichellia palustris*! I couldn’t believe it.

Now imagine the scene. It’s early morning. Students are scurrying to class along the sidewalk. A semi-respectable professor is walking with the students in front of Heritage Halls. Suddenly, with an excited look on his face, he rips off his sport coat, rolls up his trouser legs, and jumps into the ditch! He reaches down, pulls up a small water weed, and closely examines it with delight.

Within an hour I had brought tripods and high-speed cameras to the canal to study

pollination. My graduate student Rebecca Sperry and I found that *Zannichellia palustris* releases its pollen in mucilage that resembles a floating omelette. As the mucilage dissolves, the pollen grains, which are heavier than water, drop like little baseballs onto the waiting female stigmas below. We sent a description of these results to the world’s expert on aquatic plants, Professor C. D. K. Cook at the University of Zurich. His group repeated our study in Switzerland, and together with our respective students we published an announcement of our findings (see Guo, Y. H., Sperry, R., Cook, C. D. K., and Cox, P. A., “The Pollination Ecology of *Zannichellia palustris* L. [Zannichelliaceae],” *Aquatic Botany* 38, no. 4 (December 1990): 341–56).

Although my discovery of *Zannichellia palustris* in the Heritage Halls ditch led to some very interesting biology, I still must confess to feeling silly. No, I didn’t feel silly about jumping in the ditch—any of my Biology 130 students would have done precisely the same thing. What I felt silly about was that I had

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not previously noticed *Zannichellia palustris* in that ditch before, although I had walked hundreds of times along that path. I had viewed the ditch but had never before truly seen it.

How can we acquire the ability to truly see things as they are, rather than merely an idiosyncratic, partial version? Is there away that we can learn to see the world with new eyes?

We know that our Heavenly Father is able to see things in a pure and perfect way. He can see the truth of all things because he knows things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come (see D&C 93:24). The Lord has perfect vision of the universe, for all things are present with him and he knows them all (see Moses 1:6). His ability to perceive things perfectly caused the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob to exclaim, “O how great the holiness of our God! For he knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20).

I believe in the premortal existence our Heavenly Father shared with us selected glimpses of his perfect knowledge. He taught us about the atoning mission of Jesus Christ. The great Council in Heaven was one of his instructional techniques. When the plan of salvation was explained to us, perhaps in an arena like this, we shouted for joy, an expression of gratitude whose echoes were heard throughout the universe. Imagine what we felt toward the Savior as we were told that he would live a perfect life and then voluntarily give it up for us.

In our first estate we walked in the light of day. In this life, however, we have neither the clarity nor the persistence of vision that we enjoyed in the premortal existence. Through that amnesia-like process we call birth, we have forgotten the image of our Heavenly Father. In this world our vision is clouded, fogged by design to test us and prove us. None of us have access to our full premortal memories. Rather than continually beholding the face of God, in this mortal existence

temptations beset us. Isn't it interesting that these temptations in Lehi's dream are symbolized as mists of darkness? (see 1 Nephi 8:23–24, 1 Nephi 12:17.)

Yet the Lord has not left us bereft of hope. Just as the people in Lehi's dream pressed forward through the mists of darkness by clinging to the iron rod, so we can overcome the temptations that confront us by holding fast to the word of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25). When we wait upon the Lord in an attitude of humility and teachability, we become open to spiritual impressions. These spiritual impressions form a type of peripheral vision that can alert us to unseen dangers. But like airline pilots receiving guidance instructions from air traffic control, to receive this help we must be tuned to the right frequency. Sometimes the Lord speaks to us, but we do not hear or understand his promptings. This apparently was the case with Laman and Lemuel, who “were past feeling, that [they] could not feel his words” (1 Nephi 17:45).

At other times we are tuned to the right frequency but don't want to hear the instructions from the air traffic controllers. Amulek, reflecting on the time before his conversion, recalled: “I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know” (Alma 10:6). This perhaps is the state of many good people who live without God in the world, who, in the words of Camus, “while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers” (Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert [New York: Vintage Books, 1991], p. 308).

Yet though such individuals do many good deeds and bestow all their goods to feed the poor and even give their bodies to be burned (see 1 Corinthians 13:3), they miss “a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). Those who have directly experienced the pure love of Christ are opened to a far broader reality. Many who have felt his loving touch can exclaim, as

did the man healed by the Savior in the waters of Siloam, “Whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25).

How can we experience that closeness to God when we are no longer physically in his presence? When Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden, they could no longer see God (see Moses 5:4). So it is with us. Yet, like them, we sometimes vaguely sense the sweet smell of the unseen flowers of Eden. Have you ever sensed that fragrance—that closeness of heaven—where you can’t see clearly but feel that you are enveloped in a garden of love, a garden planted by our Lord? The longing for return to the unseen garden, and the tentative, halting steps we take toward it, are the beginnings of faith.

In the previous life we walked by both sight and faith (see Alma 13:3). In this life, however, we must learn to walk by faith alone. Unlike God, we cannot see the end from the beginning, and so we find ourselves in what Elder Maxwell calls “the mortal middle” (*We Talk of Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1984], p. 11). We have to make our way based only on a dim and foggy image of reality. President Joseph F. Smith said:

*While we are in mortality we are clogged, and we see as through a glass darkly, we see only in part, and it is difficult for us to comprehend the smallest things with which we are associated. [JD 19:260; see 1 Corinthians 13:12]*

There are at least two different types of errors possible in our present condition. The most obvious danger is that we will embrace something that is false. However, there is a second danger, one that perhaps is more threatening to those of us engaged in scholarly pursuits. It is that the little piece of truth we see will so fill our horizon that we will assume that our little truth is the entire truth. This error comes in mistaking our largely inchoate and partial vision of reality for “things as they

really are” (Jacob 4:13). This second type of error is more difficult to detect because our perception may in fact not be false—it just might not be the whole truth. In the case of the Heritage Hall ditch, my initial perception was not false. I had walked hundreds of times along that path and indeed had seen a ditch flowing with water. But at one moment my vision became opened and I perceived far more: habitat for a rare aquatic plant.

Perhaps a recent experience will help to make this point clear. After a BYU commencement exercise I was changing out of my academic gown when I looked up and saw President Gordon B. Hinckley. I was partially obscured from view by the coatrack as I watched President Hinckley come face to face with one of our distinguished guests, who was not a member of the Church. Our guest, a kindly scholar, has received the highest academic accolades in this world. Yet when I saw him respond to President Hinckley’s greeting, I realized that he perceived only a pleasant older gentleman—he did not see before him a prophet of God.

“Hello, my name is Gordon B. Hinckley,” the prophet said.

Our guest nonchalantly responded to the introduction.

Suddenly, from the side, Elder Spencer Condie, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, rushed forward. Taking the arm of our distinguished guest, he said, “This is President Gordon B. Hinckley. He is a prophet of the Lord.” Elder Condie then bore a brief but powerful testimony of the divinity of President Hinckley’s sacred calling.

No one else saw Elder Condie’s courageous act. As I walked out of the Marriott Center, I thought about what I had just witnessed. Elder Condie and the distinguished professor had both viewed Gordon B. Hinckley, but only one of them had seen a prophet of God.

Our guest’s perception of President Hinckley as a pleasant man was not false.

President Hinckley is a pleasant man. However, if our guest could have had the veil lifted, he would have seen that Gordon B. Hinckley is one of the “noble and great” (Abraham 3:22–23) spirits who were foreordained to hold all the keys of salvation, to be president of the Church, and to preside over the kingdom of God on this earth.

Viewing life through mortal eyes is analogous to viewing the world through a soda straw. The little bit we see may be true, but often the vast panorama of reality escapes us.

Consider the story of the prophet Elisha and his servant, who were in a city under siege. The servant was deeply alarmed when he observed that they were surrounded by the entire Syrian army. “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” he cried.

Elisha answered, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

At face value, Elisha’s reply must have seemed like nonsense to the young servant. How could he and his master number more than an entire army? But then Elisha asked God to share his prophetic vision with the young man.

*And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. [2 Kings 6:15–17]*

Like Elisha’s servant, we typically do not have access to a complete view of reality. We know, though, that the Lord can open our eyes to a greater reality. But if we candidly acknowledge our limitations and then humbly seek the Lord’s assistance, he can broaden our vision. Let me give four examples where such broadened vision can assist us in our studies.

### 1. Submission to Authority

Authority is a very important issue in scholarly work. As you write term papers, you

need to consult books and articles. Soon, however, you learn that not all written materials are of equal authority. An article clipped from a tabloid paper purchased at the grocery store carries far less weight than an article written by a recognized scholar in a peer-reviewed journal. Although we seek to cultivate gifted scholars at BYU, we realize that other virtues should be developed to complement intellectual gifts. As Elder Maxwell warns, “Genius without meekness is not enough to qualify for discipleship” (“The Disciple-Scholar,” *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar*, ed. Henry B. Eyring [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995], p. 14).

At BYU we have access to a different type of authority. Though we respect renowned scholars because of what they know, we pay even greater respect to the Lord’s servants because of who called them. If we predicate our obedience to the Lord’s servants on their scholarly qualifications, we misunderstand the essential difference, in Kierkegaard’s terms, between a genius and an apostle.

*Genius is what it is of itself . . . ; an Apostle is what he is by his divine authority. . . .*

*. . . An Apostle is not born; an Apostle is a man called and appointed by God, receiving a mission from him. [Søren Kierkegaard, “Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle,” *The Present Age*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 91–92]*

Allow me to illustrate this point through a personal example. When I was younger I heard President Kimball prophesy that the Iron Curtain would be no barrier to our missionary efforts once we were ready to step through. I assumed that his comments must refer to some distant millennial epoch. Surely, I thought, the Iron Curtain would not come down during my lifetime. My views of the permanency of the Soviet empire were reinforced when I visited East Berlin during a botanical congress. During my visit, a jazz-fusion group played a concert

at the Brandenburg Gate on the west side of the wall. Several hundred young East Germans congregated on the east side of the wall. They could not see the band but listened quietly to the sounds of the music wafting over the concrete wall. Although these peaceful young people represented no threat to the communist regime, the border guards soon dispersed the crowd with truncheons. If even music wasn't allowed to cross the Iron Curtain, how could the gospel ever be allowed to be preached freely in the Soviet bloc? Although I wanted to believe President Kimball, I fear I was like Elisha's servant. I just couldn't see how our missionaries could ever proselyte in East Germany.

Then, the miracle of November 1989 occurred. I could scarcely believe the images of the destruction of the Berlin Wall that were broadcast throughout the world. Even more astonishing, young men whom I had taught in the Aaronic Priesthood started receiving mission calls to Russia and the Ukraine. Like Elisha's servant I had viewed the world through a soda straw, but President Kimball, acting as a seer, saw it through a wide-angle lens. It is my testimony that the prophets and apostles are watchmen on the tower who can see afar off (see D&C 101:54). They are seers who can behold things not visible to the natural eye (see Moses 6:36).

Yet misunderstanding priesthood authority is not a new phenomenon. Even the Savior was misunderstood by many people. When Jesus returned to his hometown during his ministry, some people asked in derision:

*Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?*

*And his sisters, are they not all with us?*  
[Matthew 13:55–56]

Now there was some truth in these statements: Joseph the carpenter and Mary raised

Jesus. Jesus had brothers and sisters. But this analysis of Jesus was far from complete. Unlike the people who grew up with Jesus, the disciples earnestly tried to live his teachings. They prayed to know of his divinity. And because of their humility and meekness, they were visited by the Holy Ghost.

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

*And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. [Matthew 16:13–17]*

Aided by the Spirit of the Lord, Peter could see a more complete truth. Looking at Jesus, the people of Nazareth saw someone who could craft a table or a chair, the carpenter's son. Peter saw someone who would craft the Atonement, the Son of the living God.

This story demonstrates that the Holy Ghost can testify to each of us of the divinity of the Savior. It is my testimony that the Holy Ghost can also witness to us of the divine callings of the prophets and apostles. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Now if they will be wise, they will humble themselves in a peculiar manner that God may open the eyes of their understanding" (*Teachings*, p. 78). The gates of heaven open when we are humble, allowing us to be led and blessed by priesthood authority.

## 2. Waiting upon the Lord

The second way that spiritual enlightenment can help us in our academic work is by teaching us to wait upon the Lord. In this age

of the Internet and the World Wide Web, we might become frustrated when requested inspiration does not come in a single keystroke. In our studies and in our life, we need to learn to humbly wait upon the Lord. We are told in Psalms: “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14). Moroni teaches the same doctrine in the Book of Mormon: “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6).

I experienced a trial of my faith in Australia when I prayerfully beseeched the Lord to help me understand the pollination biology of a submerged sea grass. Mathematical considerations led me to predict that *Amphibolis antarctica* should be pollinated on the surface of the sea during the lowest tides of the year. Yet after three stormy days during which nothing happened, I prepared to return home on a Monday morning flight. On Sunday I awoke to find the skies sunny and the tides low: if pollination were to occur, it surely would that day. If it did, I would accept that as evidence that my theory was correct. Yet I did not want to violate the Sabbath by doing research on Sunday. After some inner conflict, I decided to drive into Melbourne, go to church, and spent the entire day there so I wouldn’t be tempted. Returning after dark, I packed my bags for the return flight the next morning. Although I had kept the Sabbath, I feared that my entire trip to Australia had been wasted.

Monday morning I waded one last time in the ocean before driving to the airport. To my astonishment, I found that the plants were on verge of pollination. I raced back to the cottage and grabbed my cameras. At the precise moment of lowest tide, thousands of tiny male flowers floated to the ocean surface, where they explosively released their pollen. The pollen then collided with the floating female stigmas. I have never been happier to miss a flight home, for I returned with a new scientific

discovery (see Cox, P. A., and Knox, R. B., 1988, “Pollination postulates and two-dimensional pollination in hydrophilous monocotyledons,” *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 75:811–18). I do not believe that I would have made this observation if I had not waited upon the Lord.

We must not despair because the Lord’s timetable is different from ours: sometimes we just have to wait. The playwright Samuel Beckett has vividly portrayed the human malady of waiting (see *Waiting for Godot* [New York: Grove Press, 1954]). While confronting depression, discouragement, and a variety of absurdities, his characters Vladimir and Estragon continue to wait for Godot, an unseen character who never appears. And yet small miracles occur along the way: Estragon’s shoes, which cause him so much pain in the beginning of the play, miraculously fit later.

So it is with us: those who wait upon God find small miracles along the way. In my case the miracle was a unique botanical observation. At other times, as in the case of the early Mormon pioneers, such small miracles are far more poignant. Peter McBride, who at the age of six had crossed the plains with the Martin Handcart Company, later wrote:

*My mother was sick all the way over, and my sister Jenetta had the worry of us children. . . . Her shoes gave out, and she walked through the snow barefoot, actually leaving bloody tracks in the snow. Father was a good singer. He had charge of the singing in our company, and the night he died he sang a song, the first verse that reads “O Zion, when I think of you, I long for pinions like a dove, And mourn to think I should be so distant from the land I love.”*

His father’s dying song remained vivid in Peter McBride’s memory for the rest of his life. Miraculously spared from starvation, young Peter McBride lived seventy-six more years, spent in devotion to the cause of Zion (Susan

Arrington Madsen, *I Walked to Zion* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1994], p. 45).

Joseph Smith promised that if we “live in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and walk humbly before Him, [then] He will exalt [us] in His own due time” (*Teachings*, p. 27). We need to learn to wait upon the Lord.

### 3. Seek for the Beautiful

My third example, seek for the beautiful, does not refer to the propensity of returned missionaries at BYU to search for a spouse. Instead, I refer to the need for caution when we are confronted by those who claim that truly facing reality requires an intimate acquaintance with evil. Great works from the *Bacchae* by Euripides to *Macbeth* by Shakespeare demonstrate the consequences of evil. But I reject arguments that a higher sense of morality can be approached by absorbing an explicit taxonomy of rape and carnage in films and books. Some even argue that we can attain transcendence by plumbing the depths of depravity. I find our popular culture to be increasingly violent, voyeuristic, and misogynistic. So it was in the days of Noah when the “earth was corrupt before God, and it was filled with violence” (Moses 8:28).

Unfortunately, there is violence and alienation in the world. But I believe that focusing entirely on evil is a form of tunnel vision—a soda-straw view of the universe. The greater reality is that the most powerful force in this universe is love. The truth is that the Creator knows and loves each of us as individuals. Isn't it moving that the first thing Joseph Smith heard from Heavenly Father in the Sacred Grove was his own name? And so it is with each of us: the first words we hear when we are baptized are our own names. But in this life we sometimes forget that God knows us intimately as individuals. This “mortal middle” is the only period in our entire existence in which we can live under the illusion that we are not surrounded by love.

Like most members of the Church, I believe that “if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we [should] seek after [those] things” (Articles of Faith 1:13). Rather than confronting depravity, I believe that realism may be better perceived by considering the lilies of the field. As Elder Neal Maxwell wrote:

*When those who call themselves realists urge us to yield to the temptations of the flesh, because everybody's doing it or because that's how things are, the living God (through the living prophets, Church, and scriptures) reminds us, not of how things seem to be, but of how things really are.*

*The genuine realist is really able to “consider the lilies in the field” and thereby see a planning and a providing God in marvelous microcosm—or he can consider the heavens and see God moving in majestic and marvelous macrocosm! (D&C 84:82; D&C 88:47) [Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978], p. 37]*

As a botanist, I interpret Jesus' instruction to “consider the lilies” not as a suggestion but as an imperative.

### 4. Mechanism and the Role of God in the Universe

This consideration of the “lilies of the field” brings me to the fourth point I would like to address. For some scholars, I fear, limited mortal vision causes them to believe that mechanistic descriptions of the universe leave no room for God. Most people, when they see a beautiful sunset, or a delicate flower, sense the loving hand of the Creator. Sometimes, however, university students who learn the physical mechanisms involved in the colors of the sunset, or the unfolding of a flower, come to believe that the role of God in their lives has been lessened. A panoramic vision would teach us that nothing could be further from the truth.

My favorite scientific experiment as a child involved the germination of bean seeds in a glass Mason jar. Although as a PhD botanist I know a great deal more about the mechanism of that process, I still find it breathtaking to see the germination of bean seeds or the blossoming of crocus flowers in the spring. Had my sense of wonder disappeared with my degree, my education would have left me impoverished indeed. In his essay *Nature* (section I, 1836), Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

*If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown!*

Imagine how we would believe and adore if we gazed at the stars and heard the voice of God, as did Moses, saying: “And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten” (Moses 1:33). To a disciple, studies in botany or astrophysics do not weaken faith in the position of God but only increase admiration and love for the Creator.

I think science is very useful at answering “how” questions: how fast will a rock fall to earth or how quickly will an allele spread through a population? But science has very little to offer on important “why” questions: Why was the world created? Why are we here? Why should we accept Christ as our Redeemer? Deriving morality from mechanism has always been a very dangerous enterprise, and one that we have been warned explicitly against in the Book of Mormon.

As you recall, Korihor was both nihilistic and militant. He knowingly sought to deceive the people of the Church, “leading away the hearts of many, causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness” by offering them his flawed, mechanistic view of the world (Alma 30:18). He taunted believers in Christ

by saying, “Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ” (Alma 30:15). Any perceived need for repentance, Korihor argued, was but the effect of a “frenzied mind” (verse 16).

Alma responded to Korihor’s arguments as a quintessential scientist, something we perhaps should expect from a prophet who later compares faith to an experiment. After listening to Korihor, Alma asked in effect, “Okay, Korihor, you claim that there is no God. Where are your data?”

*And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only.*

*But, behold, I have all things as a testimony that these things are true; and ye also have all things as a testimony unto you that they are true. [Alma 30:40–41]*

Figuratively speaking, Korihor viewed this universe through a little toy monocular he found in a Cracker Jack box, but his view was no match for Alma’s digital satellite imagery. What is the problem of embracing mechanistic explanations of the universe? Exploring mechanisms is useful if we are receptive to the greater truth of the Spirit. However, if our mechanistic view of reality causes us to resist the panoramic views offered by the Lord, ultimately we will fail to understand the things that matter the very most.

Take, for example, my field of tropical rain forest biology. I know far more about the workings of the tropical rain forest ecosystem now than I knew when I saw my first rain forest many years ago. Yet some of the most important things to me about the rain forest have little to do with scientific exploration.

When I walk through the Samoan rain forest, strolling through fern and moss, when I hear the gentle song of jungle birds, when I gaze on the shafts of light filtering to the forest floor from the rain forest canopy high above,



I feel very deeply the Spirit of the Lord. In the rain forest I feel as though I am completely enveloped in the masterpiece of a kind and loving Creator. My understanding of a few scientific details about that forest does not reduce my admiration for the Creator. Instead, each new thing I learn serves only to increase my awe and my appreciation. When I walk in the rain forest, I feel sometimes as if I am approaching the gates of Eden.

The rain forest as Eden—that notion brings us back to the question I posed at the beginning of my talk. Why did the Lord send us out of our premortal life to be tested in a world where we would have clouded vision? And what is it here that allows us to see the world with new eyes? Perhaps the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus can be read as a metaphor for our experience here on earth. While the two disciples walked, a stranger joined them:

*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. . . .*

*And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*

*But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

The disciples recounted the recent events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ but were startled when the stranger began to expound the scriptures to them.

*And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.*

*But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.*

*And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*

At this point perhaps it was the marks in his hands or the prayer he uttered or the similarity to the recent accounts of the sacrament of the Lord's supper that jogged the disciples' memories. But in any case, they looked on the stranger with new eyes.

*And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.*

*And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? [Luke 24:13, 15–16, 28–32]*

My young brothers and sisters, Christ has provided the way to open our eyes. He asks us in D&C 19:23 to “learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.” Surely it is the peaceful Spirit of the Lord that teaches us of the divinity of the Savior, a Savior that we knew well in the premortal existence but who is initially a stranger to us in this life. We must walk with him on the path to our own Emmaus, listen to him as he opens the scriptures to our understanding, and then have his divinity revealed to us through the ordinances of the priesthood. At that point, if we are truly meek and humble, the Spirit of the Lord can witness to us of his divinity. No wonder that President Brigham Young told Karl G. Maeser: “You ought not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God” (in Alma P. Burton, *Karl G. Maeser: Mormon Educator* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1953], p. 26). I do not believe that Brigham Young feared that mathematics was false, nor did he wish President Maeser to invent a unique set of “Mormon” mathematical functions. I instead believe that Brigham Young knew that, unenlightened by the Spirit of the Lord, our education would be but a mere shadow of what it could otherwise be.

This coming week, as we prepare on this campus to greet President Gordon B. Hinckley,

I pray that the Lord will bless us in the presence of his prophet with the same blessing he gave to the servant of Elisha: “And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened

the eyes of the young man; and he saw” (2 Kings 6:17). That the Lord may open our eyes, and that we may see, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.