

Perfecting the Saints

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Here is a story that I would like to share with you. The closing speaker at a stake conference was a General Authority. He had talked for about ten minutes when all of a sudden, from way back in the chapel, came a five-year-old boy strolling down the aisle. The boy was all dressed up by his mother for the occasion in gray slacks, a white shirt, and a red bow tie, and his hair was sticking up in the air with a lot of “greasy kid stuff.” This dapper young man came down the aisle and stopped right in front of the pulpit. He looked up at the speaker and said, “You talk too loud.” Then he turned around and went back to his mother.

Now the speaker hoped there would be no further interruptions. But, lo and behold, after fifteen minutes there came the boy walking down the aisle *again*, and he stopped for the second time in front of the speaker. This time, he looked up and said, “And you talk too long.”

The speaker, however, did not react and continued to finish his talk. After all, we have been trained to keep our cool under all circumstances. Then there was a beautiful congregational closing hymn and the benediction to finish the meeting, followed by the usual socializing and shaking of hands. The mother of the five-year-old boy also came to the stand

and said, “Elder, I hope you did not pay too much attention to my five-year-old boy because he was only repeating what *other* people were saying.”

We love the Saints and especially the mothers of five-year-old boys, because, after all, none of us is perfect.

Being Worthy

Today I would like to teach you about one of the aspects of the mission of the Church, namely, “perfecting the Saints.” I say *teach* because I feel I am assigned to be your teacher tonight, and all of you are my students—including the ones that are sitting on the stand. Now, I also know that on this campus—and on other campuses represented here tonight—there are many *good* students, and if we talk about perfection, I want you to remember these points:

Our perfection started already in the pre-mortal existence. It is a lifelong process while we are on earth and continues beyond the veil.

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Also, most of the perfecting is done in your own home, or, if you are a student, in your own room.

Although the words *perfect* and *perfection* are used several times in the scriptures, it is easier to describe them than to define them.

If I may use the words of Father Israel in the Old Testament that he spoke to his son Reuben, I would like to describe perfection as “excellency of dignity.” Let me explain. The English word *dignity* is derived from the Latin word *dignus*, which means “worthy.” *Excellency*, in its original meaning, is “being superior in.” So this results then in the definition of perfection as “being superior in worthiness.” Now, this may raise immediately with you the next question: But what exactly is “to be worthy”? Well, we can describe worthiness as follows: “to live in accordance with *all* the teachings of the Lord as revealed throughout the dispensations of time.” We find and can read these teachings in the four standard works of the Church.

To be worthy is also to free one’s mind of all ill feelings toward other people. We can add to this that worthy people have a great personal desire to renew the covenants they made during the ordinance of baptism by immersion into the restored Church. In other words, they have a great desire to attend sacrament meeting each Sunday.

Worthiness is determined solely on the basis of personal righteousness. For instance, accountable persons who have faith in the Lord and repent of their sins are *worthy* of baptism.

Church members who have a godly walk and conversation are worthy to partake of the sacrament. And those who have proven to keep all of the standards of the Church, after one year, are *worthy* of the blessings of the temple.

Worthiness always has reference to meriting a blessing or reward because of obedience to that law upon which its receipt is predicated.

Perfection is truly the crowing reward of complete worthiness.

The Pathway to Perfection

I also want to make it clear that there are two kinds of perfection; namely, *perfection during our earthly life* and *eternal perfection*. The latter, of course, is to a great extent the result of the former.

What is required for our earthly perfection is living a God-fearing life of devotion to the truth, of walking in complete submission to the will of the Lord, and of putting first in one’s life the things of the kingdom of God. *Eternal perfection* is reserved for those who overcome all things and inherit the fullness of the Father in the mansions hereafter. It is gaining eternal life, which is the kind of life God our eternal Heavenly Father lives in the highest heaven within the celestial world.

Many scriptures exhort the Saints to be perfect in this life; this condition will lead to eternal perfection hereafter unless a departure is made from the straight and narrow path, which is also called the pathway to perfection. This is the reason why we are repeatedly encouraged to endure in faith until the end. It is interesting to note that the word *perfect* is used to refer to men in the Old Testament like Noah and Job, who, we are told, were perfect in their generations. We also find in the Doctrine and Covenants that Seth, the son of Adam, was perfect (D&C 107:43), and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have already received their exaltation (D&C 132:37).

When the Lord said in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, *even as your Father* which is in heaven is perfect” (emphasis added), he was speaking of ultimate, eternal perfection in his Father’s kingdom. After his own resurrection, and when all power had been given to him in heaven and in earth, he amplified his exhortation by saying, “Therefore I would that ye should be perfect *even as I*, or your Father who

is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48; emphasis added).

From what I have taught you so far, it is clear the perfection is multidimensional. It involves various aspects of an individual's life, not just overcoming one or two undesirable character traits or conquering one or two bad habits.

I would also like to point out that there is an "internal" as well as an "external" perfection. As I see it, internal perfection is persistently applying gospel thinking in our daily lives. It involves our thoughts and our attitudes. We can say that internal perfection is what people around us *cannot* see.

External perfection involves our daily actions, our good deeds, and our spiritual conversations. That is what people can see and hear.

We truly have to learn to leave Babylon talk and Babylon behavior behind us and fill our lives with Zion talk and Zion behavior because Zion is where the pure in heart are. We must give heed to the loving pleadings of the Redeemer and adjust our lives accordingly.

It is also advisable to measure our progress to perfection against ourselves rather than measure it in comparison to other people. Think, for instance, how much progress we have made since we were baptized. See how much we have advanced through our near-perfect understanding of the plan of salvation.

Perfection is a subtle process, and the outcome depends much on our kinship with our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ and our continuing relationship with worthy people, with faithful, exemplary priesthood and auxiliary leaders in the Church.

Furthermore, how is the relationship with our family members in our home, with our married children (if we have them), and with our grandchildren? These aspects we have to consider also if we want to measure our perfection.

What other practical advice will keep us on "the straight and narrow path"?

The Savior's revelations as written in the scriptures and the inspired curriculum of the Church—the handbooks, the manuals, the videotapes, the filmstrips, and the personal study guides—when acted upon correctly, will promote optimal perfection.

But there is no real perfection without the ordinances and covenants that we make in the house of the Lord, especially the sealing of husband and wife to one another and children to their parents.

I have come to the conclusion that perfection is obtained more through self-development and self-study than through listening to the teachings and reminders of others. I have also come to the realization that the average member of the Church spends only about nine hours per week because of callings that require his or her presence in church, and another three hours for other church activities.

In Holland, where I was born, I learned early in school that there are twenty-four hours in a day. And I believe that is the same in the United States. And in Holland I also learned that there are seven days in a week. I think that is the same here, too. I have calculated with my calculator that there are therefore 7 times 24, or 168 hours in every week. And of these 168 hours, on the average, we spend only 9 hours in church. That is just a little over 5 percent of the total available time each week. Do we all understand now from this simple calculation that the home is indeed the ideal place to lay a firm foundation for our own perfection?

Increased faith through prayer and study and controlled behavior through self-discipline also are excellent tools for working on our own perfection. Faith, good works, and holding on to the iron rod keep a person on the road to perfection that leads to salvation and exaltation.

Let's therefore not suffer from what Elder Neal A. Maxell calls the "escalator syndrome."

Some members, after being baptized into this church, have the mistaken idea that they have stepped on an escalator that will carry them smoothly and automatically to heaven. They think that all they have to do is hang on to the iron rod, which they conceive as the handrail of the escalator that moves up and up with them to heaven. Have you ever watched people on an escalator? Have you been in the department store? Have you seen the angelic smiles on the faces of the people who move up and up and up and up? They just stand there and smile because that's where they are going. And architects always plan it this way, so that one escalator is going up and the other is going down, and they cross halfway. And you should also see the look of disdain on some of the people's faces who are going up: "We are going to heaven, and you dismal people are going in the wrong direction." That's what Elder Maxwell calls the escalator syndrome, and I thought you should be aware of that. There are no escalators in this kingdom.

When I mentioned controlled behavior through self-discipline, I thought of the scripture in the Book of Mormon where the prophet Jacob says to the multitude, "O be wise; what can I say more?" (Jacob 6:12). Now, isn't that a wonderful teaching? Maybe we should write these two words on a piece of paper, just simply, black on white for our perfection, "Be Wise." You know how I translate that, or paraphrase it? He said, "Oh, don't do dumb things. What can I say more?" I think these are marvelous teachings.

I suggest that we hang a sign like this on the door of our refrigerator in the kitchen at home because I understand that is *the* information center in most LDS homes. "Come unto Christ," "Families Are Forever," "Lengthen Your Stride," to name a few, have adorned the refrigerator door in our kitchen in years past.

If we truly understand the sacred meaning of these things, we will do everything in our power to set our lives in order. We then will

accomplish the things that need to be done to make us a little bit more perfect every day.

Let us therefore strive to be 100 percent worthy so that all may be eligible to enter the temple to perform the ordinances there and make covenants with the Lord of a higher order than the covenants of baptism and confirmation.

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve, expressed this idea very clearly during a training meeting of the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy with the following words about the higher covenants in the temple: "If we have our ordinances performed, and if we have made the higher covenants, what other things we might have missed in this life here on earth really do not matter. We can even be sick and we can be afflicted and we can be poor and we can be ignorant of many things, but if we have received our ordinances and covenants and keep them, we have truly lived. If we do not have these sacred things anchored in our lives, whatever else we may have achieved in morality will be of very little value in eternity."

The Foundations of Perfection

Because you are such good students, I want, as your teacher, to share with you six points that are really the foundation for the perfection of every member of the Church. I would call perfection a "do-it-yourself" job, and you will need these six tools when you travel on the pathway to perfection.

1.Revelation

The first part of the foundation of man's perfection is revelation. To be perfected, each individual must accept revelation through prophets and other priesthood leaders and seek personal revelation. By definition, revelation is communication from God to man with divine truth and divine guidance. Every devoted, obedient, and righteous person

receives revelation from God. Revelation is the natural inheritance of all the faithful.

The gift of the Holy Ghost will be poured out upon all those who abide the law entitling them to that divine companionship. Speaking through the Prophet Joseph Smith,, the Lord revealed, "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). Every person who is sufficiently faithful and sufficiently spiritual has the promise that God himself will appear to him. In D&C 93:1 we read: "Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am."

All Saints are expected (because they have the gift of the Holy Ghost) to gain personal revelation and guidance to go through this life and be perfected and return to their Father in Heaven. As a convert to the Church, I always marvel at the sight of very young children in the Primary organization folding their arms and standing reverently to recite by heart the Articles of Faith. I always was, and I still am, impressed to hear four- or five-year olds say the ninth article of faith: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

I also now understand perfectly that this ninth article of faith is for all of us, without exception. This is the divine guidance that Heavenly Father wants us to receive while traveling through our earthly journey in order to return unto him. As Latter-day Saints, we simply cannot live one day without revelation. Therefore, it is truly the foundation of our perfection. And the Latter-day Saint father, being the spiritual leader in his own home, must see

to it that *he* receives divine direction to lead his family in righteousness and to teach his family members to receive personal revelation also, that all may be perfected.

II. The Scriptures

The second part of the foundation of man's perfection is the scriptures. To be perfected each individual must search and obey the doctrine and commandments in the scriptures. President Ezra Taft Benson has said, "Always remember, there is no satisfactory substitute for the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. These should be your original sources." And then he said, "Read and ponder more what the Lord has said and less what others have written concerning what the Lord has said" (CES Seminar, 17 September 1976). I testify that the book of scriptures I hold in my hand contains the revelations of God through all dispensations of time from Adam to Joseph to President Spencer W. Kimball's declaration on the priesthood.

I also testify that all the promises and blessings recorded in this book shall be fulfilled. In section 1, verse 37, of the Doctrine and Covenants we read: "Search these commandments, [It doesn't say, "*Read* these commandments," it doesn't say, "*Study* these commandments," it says, "*Search*." That includes the footnotes.] for they are true and faithful, [which means dependable or trustworthy] and the prophesies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled."

If we truly seek perfection through prayerful study, we should accept the following challenges in the year that has just started.

Challenge Number 1: Members and leaders of the Church carry their scriptures to *all* church meetings, plus church and religion classes.

Challenge Number 2: Members and leaders of the Church *mark* their scriptures during talks, lessons, and self-study.

Challenge Number 3: Members and leaders of the Church and their children *read* the scriptures each day at a specific time.

We are all familiar with the scripture in Luke 12:48 where it says, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” We have received much in the scriptures and therefore how much is required of us? This is required: that we *carry* and *mark* and *search* the scriptures. Do you know why? So that we all may receive the Spirit of the Lord as the guiding force in our lives; so that we all may receive the power to resist the temptation that will come to all of us, without exception; so that we all may hold on to all the good things we have received and therefore find joy in this life.

I am sure the majority of you have heard about the threefold mission of the Church (1) to proclaim the gospel, (2) to perfect the Saints, and (3) to redeem the dead. This has been taught in so many church meetings since April 1981 that by now practically all have received a knowledge of it. But today I would like to share with you another important mission—namely, the mission of the scriptures. This mission also has three important points that we must become familiar with.

a. Place the scriptures in the hands of all the people. Every member should have a copy of the four standard works of the Church in his or her own language for personal daily use. You are the first ones tonight to hear that the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have last week approved to translate the Book of Mormon into seventy more languages, besides thirty-four languages in which the Book of Mormon has already been translated and printed. This will make the Book of Mormon available worldwide in 104 major languages in the world, and the time given by the Brethren when it must be ready is the year 2000. In the next eleven years a group of dedicated people must find the translators and the spiritual reviewers and all

the things that go into translating the Book of Mormon into seventy more languages because it is part of the mission of the scriptures.

b. Get the people into the scriptures. The members must be obedient and willing to sacrifice their time to really become acquainted with the revelations of the Lord.

c. Get the Spirit of the Lord into the hearts of the people. With the aid and inspiration of the scriptures all may be sanctified and perfected and all may therefore receive the spirituality and perfection required to return to their Father in Heaven.

President Ezra Taft Benson has repeatedly challenged us to reread the Book of Mormon. And I presume he will continue to do so until every member of the Church has shown obedience in this respect. There are, however, many time challenges in our lives. I have a little write-up here that I would like to share with you tonight; it makes interesting reading. It is called “The Choice is Ours.” Listen carefully; it may sound very familiar to you.

The Choice Is Ours

*On the table, side by side,
Lie the Book of Mormon and TV Guide.*

*One is well-worn and cherished with pride—
Alas, not the Book of Mormon, but TV Guide!*

*As the pages are turned, what shall they see?
Oh, what does it matter? Turn on the TV!*

*The word of God is rarely read—
A verse here and there before going to bed.*

*Exhausted and tired as can be,
Not from reading the scriptures, but watching TV.*

*The Plan of Salvation is full and free;
But it is found in the Book of Mormon—not on TV.*

I like that. And you must too; you are good students. Brothers and sisters, let us be obedient to the counsel of the living prophet and study the scriptures every day for our own development and perfection.

III. The Holy Priesthood of God

Another important point in the foundation of man's perfection is—and we can't do without it in this kingdom—the holy priesthood of God.

If we look at the holy priesthood from an eternal perspective, we can truly say that the priesthood is the eternal power and authority of Deity by which all things exist; by which they are created, governed, and controlled; by which the universe and worlds without number have come rolling into existence; by which the great plan of creation, redemption, and exaltation operates throughout immensity. It is truly the power of God. (See Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 594.)

It is proper and common in the Church to speak of the two great orders of the priesthood. As we can read in Doctrine and Covenants 107:1, "There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood." These priesthoods are conferred upon worthy individuals who are then ordained to offices in the priesthood.

Once the Melchizedek Priesthood has been conferred upon a worthy man, there is no advancement from one office to the other within the Melchizedek Priesthood. Every elder holds as much priesthood as an apostle or even as the President of the Church, though these latter officers hold greater administrative assignments in the kingdom. It follows also that any holder of the Melchizedek could perform any priestly function he was appointed to do by the one holding the keys of the kingdom. Normally, a priesthood bearer works in the particular segment of the priesthood circle in

which his primary responsibility lies. (See *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th edition, pp. 148–49.)

An elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood has all the priesthood he needs to qualify for exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world. If in a stake of Zion or on a ward level the office that is to be filled requires such, an elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood is ordained a high priest. This, however, is done only in the stakes of Zion and not in the mission field where the mission organization has only districts.

Now, let me give you an interesting thought on this. When I was still living in Holland, I was a counselor in the Netherlands Mission presidency to three different mission presidents, but I happily served in that calling as an elder. Even when, in 1972, I was called to serve as a Regional Representative, I was not ordained a high priest because I was living in a branch in the mission field, and my new calling did not require me to be ordained a high priest. I possessed all the authority of the priesthood to carry out my duties. So when I was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 1976, I was holding the office of elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood, not having served as a bishop or stake president. Now, this was kind of unusual. As far as I know I am the only one in this century that was called to serve on the presiding councils of an elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood when called. President Spencer W. Kimball was the one who called me, and after I was sustained, he ordained me a seventy and a high priest at that time.

In the nineteenth century the same had happened in a few instances. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball and a few others after them were called to be General Authorities of the Church when they were elders in the Melchizedek Priesthood. So I feel I am in good company.

Talking about the perfecting of the Saints, I can state that every worthy man must receive and honor the oath and covenant of the

Melchizedek Priesthood. And every father in the home has the great responsibility to prepare his sons to *receive* the priesthood and the other family members to *honor* the priesthood.

I testify to all of you that the holy priesthood is truly the foundation of men's perfection and exaltation.

IV. *The Holy Ordinances*

The next point to consider in the foundation of man's perfection concerns the holy ordinances. To be perfected, each individual must receive all the sacred ordinances, including the highest ordinances in the temple, and be true to the covenants that are made. For better understanding, let me give some definitions. A saving *ordinance* is a *sacred act*, prescribed by the Lord Jesus Christ, on the conditions of which we receive the purifying and exalting blessings of his atonement. A *covenant* is a sacred, binding, and solemn agreement with mutual promises between God and men. The new and everlasting covenant is the fullness of the gospel and embraces within its terms and conditions every other covenant that Deity ever has made or ever will make with men.

The terms and conditions of the new and everlasting covenant are accepted by every individual incident to baptism under the hands of a representative of the Lord who holds the proper office in the priesthood and who has been properly authorized to do so.

In effect, by baptism an individual signs his or her name to the *covenant of salvation*. If after baptism a person keeps the covenant and endures in faith until the end, his or her salvation is assured.

Ordination to office in the Melchizedek Priesthood and entering into that order of the priesthood named "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" are both occasions when men make the *covenant of exaltation*, being promised through their faithfulness all that the Father has (D&C 131:2, 84:38).

The ultimate purpose of these ordinances is perfection, because we have to learn how to reach and live in the presence of our Heavenly Father. We also have to learn the laws of heaven and how to obey them so we may learn how to become exalted.

I am sure that you now begin to understand why we presently have forty-one temples in operation worldwide. And it is certain that more temples will be announced by the First Presidency, built, and dedicated in the Lord's due time.

The temple ceremony clearly teaches the doctrine of where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going after this life. Through the knowledge gained in the temple, we can determine more quickly whether our daily behavior is right or wrong, and know of the need for repentance. Whether attending an endowment session, or witnessing the sealing ceremony of an eternal marriage, or just pondering and worshipping in the temple, we will feel close to God. The temple is God's house, where we have the privilege of learning of him and his purposes. To go through the temple, receive our endowments, and regularly attend is to receive some of the highest learning of eternity. [Rulon G. Craven, *The Pursuit of Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988) pp. 19–20]

It was President Harold B. Lee who expressed the thoughts as follows;

The temple ceremonies are designed by a wise Heavenly Father who has revealed them to us in these last days as a guide and a protection throughout our lives that you and I might not fail of an exaltation in the Celestial kingdom where God and Christ dwell. [Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1973), p. 141]

Participating in the ordinances and truly living the higher covenants made in the temple take faith, courage, and obedience. The

responsibility to be obedient to these covenants and receive those great blessings lies with each of us. We are individually responsible for keeping the covenants necessary for exaltation. Each week, as we attend sacrament meeting, we participate in renewing our covenants by partaking of the sacrament. In so doing, we covenant again and again to always remember Jesus Christ and to keep the commandments that he has given us, and then we are promised that we will always have his Spirit to be with us.

His Spirit, accepted by us and acted upon in faith, will always lead us in the path of righteousness. In Doctrine and Covenants 78:7, the Lord has revealed: "For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you."

I testify that there is no perfection without the holy ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

V. Personal Talents and Gifts

The next point of the foundation of man's perfection is the development of personal talents and gifts. We must be mindful that these gifts come from God and were acquired in the premortal existence to be used and developed after we start our mortal probation. Their purpose is to enlighten, encourage, and edify the faithful so they will be guided on the pathway to perfection.

I looked up the definition of *talents* in *Webster's Dictionary*, and this is what it says: "Talents: inborn creative abilities making for ease and dexterity in performance." Well, if this is true, then we surely have a vast reservoir of talents in the Marriott Center here tonight. And the presence of so many truly gifted people is proof of the divinity of the Lord's work.

Now, I realize that your personalities may be different—all of you have different personalities. Your temperamental makeup is

different and your prevailing moods and inclinations may be different, but some things we all have in common. At one time we lived as spirit children with our Heavenly Father, we all were born through earthly parents, and we all shall leave this mortal existence in the Lord's due time. The big question is how do we live our lives between arrival and departure? All those who have been received in the kingdom of God on the earth through the covenant of God on the earth through the covenant of baptism in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints belong to the covenant people of the Lord and as such have received tremendous blessings of spiritual gifts to be led, guided, and directed.

In the scriptures we find many of the gifts mentioned by name; for instance, knowing by revelation that the Book of Mormon is truly the word of God. There is also the gift of being valiant to proclaim the gospel as well as the gift of healing, the gift of discernment, and the gift of speaking different languages. I have only time to name a few. There are, however, numerous other gifts of the Spirit. They are *infinite in number* and *endless in their manifestations*. I quote from the Book of Mormon again, Moroni 10:8:

And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them. [Emphasis added]

We have to develop the divine gifts to *teach*, to *strengthen*, and to *serve others*, and in so doing we work on our own perfection also.

The duty and responsibility of the LDS father in the home is to assist his family members to develop their talents and gifts for the same purposes and to become indeed an eternal family.

VI. Keeping the Commandments of God

The next and last point is more or less a resume or a summing up of what I have taught you tonight: keeping the commandments of God. There is no perfection without obeying the commandments and enduring in faith until the end.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who is so sorely missed from our ranks, phrased it so beautifully in his book *Mormon Doctrine* under the heading “Commandments” that I would like to quote him.

These things which men are directed to do to attain peace in this life and gain eternal life in the world to come are collectively called the commandments. They are the laws, ordinances, covenants, contracts, statutes, judgments, decrees, revelations, and requirements which come to man from God. They are “the words of eternal life,” with reference to which it is proclaimed: “You shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of

God.” (D&C 84:43–44) [MD, p. 149; emphasis in original]

I think, brothers and sisters, *that* is the great challenge for each and every one of us, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. And I hope that through my teachings I have been able to make this great challenge more visible and the ultimate goal more attainable. Let’s simplify the challenge by accepting the invitation to live a perfect day one at a time.

Will you try to live tomorrow a perfect day? And if you fail to do so, then try again the next day. Then we truly make progress in carrying out one aspect of the mission of the Church, which is the mission of every individual member of the Church, namely, “to perfect the Saints.”

I humbly pray that we may all be successful in doing so, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.