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A Review Continued

Comment: *This material we've been discussing is very good. It will help me to communicate with my missionary niece who is having real hard time talking with other people who are not members of the Church.*

Having grown up on a ranch the only beings I mostly talked with were cows. I preached a lot of sermons to the south-ends of north-bound cows! Sometimes the personalities of cows reminded me of people I had known in high school. One of the hardest things I had to do on my mission was stand on a street corner and ask the GQ's (Golden Questions). Many of the faces of people I met in England reminded me of the cows back on the ranch! But what we have to do is figure out a way to have our friends and family members ask questions. The first step in learning Gospel truths is asking questions.

All revelation comes because of questions. The first vision comes because Joseph asked a question. Moroni appears in Joseph's room because he was on his knees asking a question. John the Baptist appears on the bank of the Susquehanna because Joseph and Oliver were asking questions. The revelations that Joseph Smith received came because Joseph was asking questions. IF we can figure out a way to get our family members to ask a question, that means they are ready for an answer. If you are teaching youth, we ought to figure out what we can say that will prompt a question in their minds.

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Commandments are a divine sign of God's love for us and our happiness. Commandments do not create or make a sin...commandments reveal where changes are needed to bring us back to God in Confidence, Happiness, JOY, and Glorification.

Our youth will sometimes argue that if a given law (commandment) wasn't there, they would not be sinning. If the speed limit was only 75, they would not be getting all these tickets. One could live any lifestyle they wanted if there wasn't a law in the scriptures about alternate lifestyles. They cry, "Let's do away with the scriptures — let's do away with the law! The church needs to do away with these laws, and I would not be sinning." The thing is, God has an eternal perspective and knows what will give us the joy, and happiness and glorification in this life and in the next life. He has given us laws that will protect us if we will but use them. God's laws are not restrictions — they are recipes for our eternal happiness. Joseph taught:

God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits. (TPJS, p 354)

The commandments teach us where changes in our character are to be made. It's like God has frosted a cake with a little bit of guilt. Guilt can be good if it initiates change. Guilt is like pain. For example, if we don't experience physical pain at the onset of appendicitis, we might just fall over dead. Guilt tells us that something needs to be changed. Sin is missing the mark. It is anything that distracts us from loving God and from loving our fellow man.

John 14:16-17

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (because He is:)

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; (because ye seek for truth) for he dwelleth **with** you, and shall be **in** you.

The scriptures use three prepositions when describing the Holy Ghost: He can be **with** you, **in** you, and can come **upon** you. Moroni 6:4 teaches us that after one is baptized, "they were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost." It was not baptism that cleansed them; it was by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is important as He inspires us, gives us the direction we need and helps us come to the right answers to our questions.

John 14:26

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man. (D&C 84:85)

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Matt 10:19-20)

Alma 17:2-3

2 Now these sons of Mosiah . . . had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

3 But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.

When one studies and searches the scriptures the Holy Ghost can and will bring all things back to your remembrance allowing you to teach and convince with a power you would not normally have. By knowing and using the scriptures as that standard makes a difference in our teaching.

Question: *What is meant by "knowing the word"?*

Jesus elaborates on that in **John 14:24**

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

The "word" is the teachings of Christ, which become scripture. Alma 34:5-6 also gives us added insight:

5 And we have beheld that the great question which is in your minds is whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ.

6 And ye also beheld that my brother has proved unto you, in many instances, that the word is in Christ unto salvation.

John 15:1-4

1 I am the **true vine**, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that **beareth not fruit** he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**

We cannot bear fruit unless we abide in the true vine, which is Christ. We are to abide in Christ and in His teachings (the word). We cannot bring forth fruit unless we have a standard of our scriptures. The fruit is our character change if we abide in the true vine!

John 15:5-8 (Notice the "If & Then" phrases in these verses)

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing.**

6 **If** a man abide not in me, [**then**] *he is cast forth as a branch*, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 **If** ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, [**then**] *ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

8 Herein is my Father glorified, **that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.**

John 15:11-14

11 These things have I spoken unto you,
**that my joy might remain in you, and
that your joy might be full.**

12 This is my commandment, (This is what I really want you to do.)

That ye love one another,

as I have loved you. (Your Joy will be full if you love one another as I have loved you.)

13 Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, **if** ye do whatsoever I command you.

This is our contribution to the atonement! Jesus provides further instruction:

Matt 22:36-40

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

We might say also that upon these two commandments hang all judgment. Our character will be our judgment of how we have kept these two commandments. The thing is, we will be judging our own selves. Mormon 9:3-5 asks pointed questions pertaining to the conclusion of our probationary state:

3 Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws?

4 Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.

5 For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you.

Our confidence will either wax strong in His presence, or we will shrink and would if we could command the rocks to fall upon us to hide us from his presence. (**Mosiah 2:38; 3:25; Alma 12:14**)

These chapters started out with the introduction of the sacrament. Below is a side by side comparison of the sacramental prayers found in the D&C, section 20:

D&C 20:77, 79

<p>77 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.</p>	<p>79 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.</p>
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The sacrament blessings are invoked on the souls who partake of the Bread and the Water. It's not a blessing upon the bread and the water, but it is on the souls who partake of them. To partake of the sacrament unworthily means to partake of the emblems of Christ's death without any intention of changing your character. In this case we are not partaking of the

sacrament in remembrance of His body or His blood, and neither are we taking upon ourselves His name.

Common Elements of the Sacrament Prayers

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ to

Bless and sanctify this bread / water to the souls of all those who partake

That they may do it in remembrance of thy Son,

That they may witness unto thee

That they do always remember Him

That they are willing

To take upon them the name of thy Son

That they may have his Spirit to be with them

Alma 13:16

16 Now these ordinances were given after this manner,
that thereby the people **might look forward** on the Son of God, . . .
that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins,
that they might enter into the rest of the Lord.

Think about this — all Melchizedek ordinances were given that we might have a hope for a future reality. Ordinances do not mean *anything unless we change our character!* The sacrament is an ordinance of obedience. We are promised to have the Lord's Spirit if we partake of those emblems worthily.

The Basic Purpose of all scripture is to set up upon the earth the order of life for which the earth was designed.

From Genesis to Revelation, the purpose of scripture is to help us get from the creation of this earth to the creation of a New Heaven and a New Earth. That means a strict separation of God's people from the "world" as we know it, and all its doings. The Lord prays not for the 'World' but only for those who have come OUT of the world. They must be joined to him and the Father (Atonement), but the world can NOT be.

Alma 34:9-10, 14-17

9 For **it is expedient that an atonement should be made;** for according to the great plan of the Eternal God **there must be an atonement made,** or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost, and must perish **except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made.**

10 For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice.

14 And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.

15 And thus **he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name**; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. **(Mercy will satisfy justice so that justice cannot separate you from God; so that your confidence may wax strong in the presence of God. Faith in Christ and His atonement will lead to one's change of character.)**

16 And thus mercy [the atonement] can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety (the ritual embrace), while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore **only unto him that has faith unto repentance** is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption. **(Our faith in Christ and His Atonement will bring about our change of character.)**

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, **that** ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, **that** ye begin to call upon his holy name, **that** he would have mercy upon you;

BHP: Therefore my brethren, may you begin to exercise your faith in Christ and the atonement unto the change of character; that you begin to call upon his holy name; that he would have mercy on you, satisfying the demands of justice and encircling you in the arms of safety, giving you the time to change your character into the character of God, by your own agency and choice.

There is a big difference between grace and mercy. Grace saves all the posterity of Adam from the Fall — all will be resurrected and brought back to the presence of God. Mercy, however, is only activated by the exercise of our faith in Christ unto the change of our character, giving us the time, in our imperfections, to develop the character that makes God, *God*. Moroni ends his record with these words:

32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and **if** ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, **then** is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and **if** by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, **[then]** ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

33 And again, **if** ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, **then** are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, **which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins**, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moroni 10:32-33)

It is because of the covenant of the Father that our sins are remitted. The covenant of the Father is part of the Father's Plan from the very beginning. Remember what Joseph taught:

“God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, ... institute[d] laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.” (TPJS, p 354)

The Gospel needed to become flesh; The Word needed to become flesh; an infinite and eternal sacrifice needed to be made so that the bowels of mercy could satisfy the demands of justice that would give those who exercise their faith in Christ and that atonement the time needed to develop the character that makes God, *God*.

Some Sunday Thoughts on Saturday Night

The wrath of God so often spoken of is nothing more than the demands of justice which He, God, cannot control or expiate except through our agency or choice to accept the propitiation (Atonement) offered to each person by Christ. This propitiation is the sacrifice that will satisfy the demands of justice, providing the penitent heart the time required to develop the character that is capable and worthy to dwell in the presence of God with a strong and everlasting confidence; which spirit would have no more desire to sin, (Mosiah 5:2) and would be unable to look upon sin except with abhorrence (Alma 13:12).

This propitiation of Christ requires from each beneficiary to come unto Him, with faith in Him and His Atonement that invokes a repentant heart that must be linked to a hope of future realities (ordinances) and a celestial resurrection. To begin the process of a spiritual salvation a personal contribution of a sincere faith and hope must be activated in the life of the individual. As this process of salvation begins, faith in Christ and the Atonement, with a hope of the future realities of immortality and eternal life, can create an internal power of change (Moroni 7:33) when coupled with an understanding of the earthly baptismal covenant of obedience and a personal commitment of character change (Repentance).

Thus, salvation by agency will create an inherent and intrinsic character change produced or developed by an obedience to law that will be overtly manifested in one's love of God and fellow man. This developed character change is defined as charity in our scriptures: “And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (Moroni 7:45).

One of the greatest powers manifested in and through and by the Atonement of Christ is the power to change the nature of a fallen eternal spirit into that character that is worthy for exaltation (see Moses 6:60). This is the real miracle of the atonement! It is real and it is true!! God's Plan provides everything an eternal spirit needs in order to develop the same character God has.

The Church is true no matter what I say; even more than that, the Gospel is true, and it is real and it centers on Christ, and it will endure. Jesus is the Christ, and these scriptures are true. This I say in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.