

Truman G. Madsen. "Joseph Smith and the Sources of Love." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1966): 122–134.

From the Pulpit

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE SOURCES OF LOVE

Truman G. Madsen

We plan to publish, in this section of the journal, sermons which we believe will be of particular interest to our readers. This is the twenty-third annual Joseph Smith Memorial Sermon, given under sponsorship of the L.D.S. Institute of Religion at Utah State University in December, 1965. Professor Madsen, the author of a number of essays on Mormon theology and contemporary thought, studied philosophy at Harvard, was recently President of the New England Mission, and is now Director of the Institute of Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University. He has provided footnotes to his sermon for its publication here.

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TODAY WE REACH INTO A REALM THAT is subtle and intricate, all intertwined with feeling. More than usual I pray that you will be forgiving if my own feelings are apparent. As we drove past the Logan Temple this morning, I could not recall ever hearing the word "love" in the endowment ordinance, that summation of eternity presented there. But does love have on earth a more glowing *demonstration*? Just so, the Prophet is profoundly articulate on the sources of love in ways that transcend words.

* * *

Some first vital words came when Joseph was a lad of only fourteen summers, kneeling in a shaft of light. They are both a divine indictment and an imperative, and we should take them

personally. Said the voice, "They drew near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me."¹ Late in his short life, the Prophet stood in the midst of a multitude and said, "People ask, 'Why is it this babbler gains so many followers, and *retains* them?' I answer: It is because I possess the principle of love."²

What principle is this? Return to a scene at Harmony, Pennsylvania. Here two young men (the Prophet was then twenty-three), immersed in poverty, living on mackerel, are translating "a great and marvelous work" on scratch paper. Oliver Cowdery sits and struggles to make readable ink marks.³ The words Joseph dictates are these:

All things must fail . . .

But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

Wherefore my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which He hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of His Son Jesus Christ.⁴

Have you ever wondered how the Prophet felt in such moments? We do not often reflect that translation (no matter how it be "explained") was a learning process for him, often tintured with first-time wonderment. One day, Emma Smith records, she was writing for him and he dictated the phrase, "the wall of Jerusalem." The Prophet paused and then said, in effect, "Emma, I didn't know there was a wall around Jerusalem."⁵ Perhaps a similar exclamation came from him when the passage above was given on the sources of pure love.

The characterization of "pure love" as "bestowed," something with which we may be "filled," becomes personified in the portrait of Jesus Christ in the "Fifth Gospel," Third Nephi. This picture, in fact, is more than a sufficient answer to the query, "Why another book?" For here, surely, is the heart of the Book of Mormon. In this segment of the life of Christ, otherwise unknown, He is a resurrected, composite self.⁶ He has received "the glory of the Father" and dares to apply the word "perfect" to Himself. His is not an

¹ "Writings of Joseph Smith," 2:19, Pearl of Great Price.

² *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City, 1938), p. 313.

³ The original manuscript is on a variety of kinds and sizes of paper. Oliver Cowdery's handwriting is almost without punctuation, as if the whole book were one long dictated sentence.

⁴ Moroni 7:46-48.

⁵ *Saints Herald*, XXXI (June 21, 1884), 396-397.

⁶ III Nephi 11-26.

abstract, or metaphysical, or "utterly other" perfection. He is, in all the highest senses of flesh and spirit, a personality. He can be seen, felt, embraced — loved. He is the revelation of the Father, not because "two natures" are combined but because He is now exactly like the Father in nature. He is the revelation of man, not because He has condescended to act like one but because He has now become what man may become. He is still "troubled" by the degradations of Israel. He ministers and responds to a multitude who have great spiritual capacities. His heart is "filled with compassion." He kneels with them in prayer, consumed by "the will of the Father." He calls down upon them the powers of the Spirit, first its purifying, then its glorifying, and then, I believe, its sealing powers. He weeps and then weeps again as he blesses their children. He prays in ways that reach beyond mortal grasp, and yet "their *hearts* were opened and they did understand in their *hearts* the words which he prayed."⁷ This is the highest possible order of existence.

Although they profess monotheism, our Christian creeds actually teach two kinds of God. They retain only shadows of Christ's personality, or, if they seriously affirm it, they likewise affirm that there is an unconditioned, non-spatial Something that is the "real" and "ultimate" Deity. They permit us, of course, to think of God in personal terms, provided we do not assume our images to be literally true.⁸ But through Joseph Smith's recovery of this portrait in the Book of Mormon and its confirmation in his own experience, we know that the Living Christ is a Christ of response, who not only feels all we feel, and by similar processes, but wills us to feel all He feels. The spectrum of affection, presently limited in us, is filled out fully in Him, not because He is less personal than we but because He is more.

In the same vein, the Prophet recorded, before he was twenty-five, a central pearl of the Pearl of Great Price, the vision of Enoch. Here the Father (as the Son did later) suffers the anguish of our sleepy, ugly indifference, an anguish that issues in tears. When Enoch, appalled, marveled and cried out, after naming all the perfections of God, "How is it *thou* canst weep?" the answer came,

Unto thy brethren have I said . . . that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood.⁹

⁷ III Nephi 19:33; cf. 17:14–17. (Italics mine.)

⁸ A few contemporary writers have described a more immanent, personal God, but the usual emphasis is still on the transcendence of Deity.

⁹ Moses: 7:33.

Millions have said we need God, but that God "has no needs." Joseph Smith witnessed that there is a sense in which God and Christ need us and our love.

* * *

Now it seems clear that we do not (and cannot) love because of walls we ourselves have erected, which can only be eradicated from mind and heart when "we see as we are seen" of God. Rufus Jones,¹⁰ Alfred North Whitehead,¹¹ and Henri Bergson¹² dared to speculate, in this century of abysmal alienation, that God is closer to man and man closer to God, in possibility, than the old dualistic theology would allow. They have convinced very few. Love is defined in one contemporary statement as the "reunion of the separated."¹³ But its advocates work with assumptions which make reunion impossible.

It is common to suppose that in love "opposites attract." This may be a motive of much popular writing about the transcendence of God — as if the more unlike two beings are, the greater the power of love. Love, for Joseph Smith, however, is a relationship of similars. "Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence, wisdom receiveth wisdom, truth embraceth truth, virtue loveth virtue, light cleaveth unto light, mercy hath compassion on mercy."¹⁴ Even the opposites *within us* must merge and harmonize before we can truly love. The "pure love of Christ," then, is Christ's love for us as well as ours for Him. Actual kinship is the core of it. The commandment to love is a hopeless request until we begin to encounter those qualities in fulness in Him and in embryo in ourselves. That presupposes individual revelation.

There is in most of us a hidden apology for the lack of love. We tend to identify love with action, to credit ourselves with it when we do a good turn hourly, when we serve in the sheer constraint of obligation. Joseph Smith turns us from that stone to bread. Going the second (or the first) mile grudgingly, or even habitually and numbly, is not Christ's way. Love becomes a fountain even "unto the consuming of our flesh" in the growing person — not a source of drudgery but a captivating awareness that pulls us even in our most miserable hours.¹⁵ Until our duty-sense merges

¹⁰ *A Call to What Is Vital* (New York, 1949).

¹¹ *Religion in the Making* (New York, 1926).

¹² *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (New York, 1935).

¹³ Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York, 1960).

¹⁴ Doctrine and Covenants, 88:29-40.

¹⁵ III Nephi 4:21.

into this "energy of heart," until love is the feeling-tone at the root of all our feelings and actions, we are still spiritual infants trying to get credit for our moral strength. In religion, this heroic vanity can lead eventually to a sort of insanity.

It is also typical to say we must purge our love of self from our love of God. Hence many a sentimental sermon about an "unselfish" love for God that would cheerfully go to endless torment if it pleased Him. The Prophet drew the thin, precious line here. Am I selfish when I care so little about my total self that I push some fragment of it to fleeting satisfaction, disease, and death? No. In a sense, I am not selfish enough. God, taught the Prophet, loves Himself in an inclusive way and hence "everything God does is to aggrandize His kingdom."¹⁶ Such love expands the "self" to include all selves, all life; and God, therefore, cannot be happy except in the happiness of all creatures. Call that "selfish" if you like. But notice that the opposite is a selfishness which seeks something in indifference to or at the expense of others. We are commanded to be selfish as God is. Joseph Smith taught that there is a law (not, if I understand him, of God's making but in the very nature of things) that "upon no other principle can a man permanently and justly aggrandize himself."¹⁷ This is the meaning of the Master's cryptic phrase: "Lose yourself . . . and find yourself." Expand your caring to include all carings and you begin to overcome destructive selfishness. It is the shrinking awareness of self that leads us to hate ourselves that is most agonizing to the Father.

* * *

We have thought that we must separate our love of God from our love of the world. In one sense, yes. But the Prophet taught that God, who formed and beautified this world, will enable its sanctified sons and daughters to inherit it in its eventual full-flowering re-creation.¹⁸ Again, like has affinity with like. When John the Beloved said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are *in* the world," he meant the corruptions of men in the world. The Prophet clarified the preposition and thus the proposition. His version reads, "Love not the world, neither the things that are *of* the world."¹⁹ The lights and shadows of Eden in all color and variety

¹⁶ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., revised (Salt Lake City, 1948), V, 385.

¹⁷ *Teachings*, p. 387.

¹⁸ Christ said the beatified shall "inherit the earth." Small comfort for those who despise it.

¹⁹ I John 2:15 in *The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation by Joseph Smith* (Independence, Missouri, 1927).

are *in* this world, not just as a fading racial memory but as a prophecy.²⁰ We must love the world, and what is *in* it, as we love all that feels and all that moves. Once again a withdrawal doctrine is transformed into a participation doctrine. The world itself is a composition of the love of God.

These instances suggest the close interrelationship of love and knowledge. Our hearts cannot get closer to God than our minds. And here, once more, an assumption is uprooted. We all quietly suspect that love may destroy "objectivity" and the perception of truth, if not man to man at least man to cosmos. The Prophet taught the exact contrary. The tensions, and they are sometimes traumatic, between our struggle for God and our struggle for truth are due to our ignorance of both. We cannot apprehend nor comprehend reality as it is save through the love of God. And the Prophet taught that any imposed limitation on our pursuit of either is a limitation on love. For himself he wrote, "It feels so good not to be trammelled." Thus, in one breath he could say that we want all men to "drink into one principle of love," and in the next add, "One of the grand fundamental principles of 'Mormonism' is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may."²¹

Often love is described as something that "covers" sins, a sort of "blindness" to our own or others' defects. Says the scripture, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." Perhaps so. But the Prophet strengthened the verb. "Charity," he wrote, "*preventeth* a multitude of sins."²² In us and in others, love is the Lord's preventive medicine; and, as we are now learning, it is the only lasting foundation for powerful therapy, whether for sin or for suffering.

But does not love for God separate us from those who love Him not? The Prophet replies, writing from a damp, submerged dungeon, that God-like love, the unique love of those who walk uprightly, is "without prejudice." "It gives scope to the mind which enables us to conduct ourselves with a greater liberality toward all that are not of our faith than what they have for themselves."²³ He taught, in fact, that it is a mark of our unfamiliarity with the principles of godliness when our affectionate feelings are "contracted." The closer we come to our Heavenly Father, he told some huffy sisters in Relief Society, the more we look upon perishing

²⁰ The "end of the world" for Joseph Smith is the end of rampant wickedness, not the destruction of the earth. (*Teachings*, p. 98.)

²¹ *Teachings*, p. 313.

²² I Peter 4:8 in *The Holy Scriptures . . . Corrected . . . by Joseph Smith*, *op. cit.*

²³ *Teachings*, p. 147. We love others because of their partial or potential loveableness, not in spite of its absence.

souls with compassion. "We feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders and cast their sins behind our backs."²⁴ It follows, and he gave it as a lasting key, that we know something in us has passed from life to death when we hate the brethren.²⁵ Any brethren.

Millions in the world today believe that the love of God, or *agape*, must be finally separated from the love of our mates, or *eros*. The latter "*we know*" will end. From the Greek distrust of matter and the flesh comes this attitude (if not the explicit doctrine) that religious love, when pure, is "purely spiritual," and anything physical cannot be as pure. Conclusion: the lyrical joys of the body are of this world only. The Prophet Joseph, in contrast, teaches that there is no unholy love (though there is much unsanctified lust). Romantic and marital love are approved of God here and now (which most Christians will allow). But he taught far more: *agape* and *eros* merge as modes of the ultimate nature of God! Whole-souled love includes the love-expressions of a glorified body even for Him. In us the seed of such love is not only blessed rather than cursed by God, but "visted with my power" and "without condemnation on earth or in heaven."²⁶

Thus Joseph's teaching heals a malaise that plagues men to this hour. An innocent child might ask, "Why did God make us creatures but *never* to be Creators-like-Him?" The reply is either that He *could* not (and that is embarrassing for theologians who insist on God's power to make anything from nothing) or that He loves us — but not that much! Joseph testified He *did* and *does* love us that much. The chasm which religious etiquette says we must not attempt has been bridged, not by an arrogant man but by the God of life and love. If men would receive the doctrine (but guilt and terror yield slowly), it would cure many of the psychological and social maladies of our age.

* * *

Let us turn now to one of the "hows" of love. We are living in the midst of what is called a "liturgical revival." Many of the wings of Christianity, with cues from psychology and art, have sought to find again what they earlier abandoned. They have seen the vision of reaching men, in a deeper way, through the impact of liturgy, ceremony, and sacramental act; extensive research is uncovering patterns of worship, old and new, that might heighten this mode of contact.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137, 193; I John 3:14; *Juvenile Instructor*, XXVII, 42.

²⁶ Doctrine and Covenants, 132:48.

The Prophet (violating, by the way, the whole thrust of New York revivalism) introduced a concept of ordinances which is unequivocal. "Without the ordinances of the priesthood and the authority thereof," a revelation says, "the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh."²⁷ For him the function of baptism, confirmation, sacrament, temple worship is not only psychological, but to teach and remind us of principles and to lead us to renewed commitment. Ordinances are also divinely appointed "channels" and "keys" of divine awareness. To receive them, to cultivate their influence within our very inward parts, is to encounter the Divine and to be ennobled and sanctified into His very image. "Being born again," said the Prophet to the Council of Twelve, who were about to undertake foreign missions, "comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances."²⁸

One can have the forms without the power but not the power without the forms. Of course ritual may be "empty." But so it may be full, full of godly power.

Moreover, ordinances require the upward reach from below. The Prophet was commissioned to establish at the center of every ordinance a covenant, an "everlasting covenant." By such enactments we do not essay to try or experiment or hope. We say we will do and will not do certain things — forever. This, the Prophet taught, opens the buds of our nature in a decisive act that reverberates through the heavens. Until that takes place, in sacred places in the presence of witnesses and under the influence of God, we do not deeply feel the nurturing spirit sunshine that increases love.

* * *

Let us look now at the Prophet's own makeup, stressing aspects that carry an element of surprise. Note first that his was a masculine love, combined with a robust and muscular faith. Love led him, for example, to strong rebukes of his brethren. Virtuous men grew; others became almost demonic. "I frequently rebuke and admonish my brethren," he wrote, "and that because I love them." Over the long haul he had ample, yes, crushing reason to know that, as the Master learned, "the higher the authority the greater the difficulty of the station."²⁹

Love led him to test and try men's love for Christ, and for himself, to the core of their being. In some ways the Church's survival in that first generation required it. Thus he could walk into a

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 84:21.

²⁸ *Teachings*, p. 162.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 113.

Nauvoo store and say, "Brother Wooley, we want all of your goods for the building up of the Kingdom of God." Brother Wooley (with what inner turbulence we can only guess) set about loading his merchandise into boxes, excepting only some goods on consignment from St. Louis. Calling the Prophet, he offered to pack them also. The Prophet asked searchingly, "Are you really willing, Brother Wooley, to give us all your store goods?" "Yes." Joseph, with deep feeling, embraced his shoulder and said, "Then replace them on your shelves."⁸⁰

Filled with the love of God, the Prophet yet knew, to his depths, that suffering and stress like unto Christ's are inevitable elements of life. Love cannot obliterate pain. It *can* give it meaning and redeeming power. In one of his bleak hours, crying out, he asked like Job, on behalf of his people and himself, "Why this horror? Why us? How long will it last?" He received assurances, under a wave of Spirit, which belong with the great religious consolations of all time:

If thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high . . . all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good.

The Son of Man hath descended below them all.

Thine Adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.⁸¹

For him that "small moment" was five more tempestuous years.

Yet this kind of love led the Prophet to an exhilarating outlook on life, in all its aspects. He was other-worldly but also this-worldly. Call him an intellectual, a contemplative, but add that he was a statesman, a thoroughly active leader. If you say he enjoyed drama, music, poetry, you must add that he also delighted to wrestle, play ball, jump to the mark, pull stakes. Note that he was a dignified, serious, ponderous man, but add that he was gifted in social animation, was cheerful, both playful and warm, incapable of ignoring the child, the laborer, or the aged friend. He could turn a phrase, swing an ax, cut a caper. Most traditional distinctions we make in defining the "religious man" break down in him and in those who caught the vision through him. As Divinity intended, temporal and spiritual fused in him.

Read, for example, about the day a group of the Saints met in the Nauvoo Temple. Part of the morning was spent in sweaty, gritty cleaning and painting. Then came a study class. Later, bathed and dressed in their temple robes, they participated in tem-

⁸⁰ Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City, 1901), I, 632.

⁸¹ Doctrine and Covenants, 121:7, 8; 122:7, 8.

ple worship. A prayer and testimony service followed in which the Spirit of God was so intense that many spiritual gifts were manifest. The group next adjourned to the upstairs rooms and relished a feast of raisins and cakes. And then, until late in the evening, they enjoyed music and dancing. What? The whole of life — even dancing — surrounded by a temple of God? Yes. And why not? For the Prophet, every attempt to withdraw “religiousness” from some part of living, including recreation, was a blow against both God and love, and therefore the self.⁸²

* * *

Joseph exercised an almost irresistible influence on the lives that surrounded him. Parley P. Pratt, for one, after interviews with the Prophet which, he says, “lifted a corner of the veil and gave me a single glance into eternity,” burst into a rhapsody of words:

I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved — with a pureness — an intensity of elevated, exalted feelings, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this groveling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion: a kind, ministering angel, given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory forever and ever. In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.

These “glorious principles concerning God and the heavenly order of eternity” are, Parley wrote, such that “none but the highly intellectual, the refined and pure in heart, know how to prize, and . . . are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness.”⁸³ They grew in him until his own martyrdom.

Remember that some of the Prophet’s own brethren, including ten of the original Twelve Apostles at one time or another, out of the lust for power or pride of life or base transgression, came to betray him. (Of the original Twelve, only Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball remained constantly faithful.) But over the following ten years there grew around him a group of men and women who were a marvel of united power and love.

We can read whole volumes in a sentence or two. To Jedediah M. Grant, who had “dyspepsia,” the Prophet one day said, “If I could always be with you I could cure you.”⁸⁴ Gauge the love-meaning in that!

⁸² “Diary of Samuel Whitney Richards, 1824–1909” (typescript, Brigham Young University Library), pp. 17–18.

⁸³ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 3rd edition (Salt Lake City, 1938), pp. 297, 298.

⁸⁴ *Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young . . . and Others* (Liverpool, 1856), III, 12.

Why did Willard Richards, weary after thirty days of penning affidavits in that final period of tragedy, offer to be hanged in the Prophet's stead? Why did John Taylor, blasted in the same volley of bullets, but not fatally, write the hymn, "Oh, Give Me Back My Prophet Dear"? Why did Wilford Woodruff write such extravagant things as this in his Journal: "There is not so great a man as Joseph standing in this generation. His mind, like Enoch's, expands as eternity, and God alone can comprehend his soul."⁸⁵

Brigham Young, for the first thirty days after the Prophet's death, could not be comforted. At Winter Quarters there came a renewed revelatory touch with the Prophet. And for the rest of Brigham's monumental life, there was no forgetting. He died saying, "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph."

It is easy to conclude that these are the product of insipid and sentimental blindness. But will we someday realize that only such persons, imbued with the Spirit of God, could have really loved and therefore really known the Prophet as he was? If so, these are, indeed, touches of the "pure love of Christ."

* * *

A prevailing need for love, even in its most unenlightened forms, is the uncontested finding of the contemporary study of man, one of the things we know for sure. But we live in a strange time, for the very experts who tell us this warn, and wisely, that often the thing we most want is projected instead of discovered and that much that we call "love," especially in religion, is make-believe. It follows that the religion that has the greatest power to answer our thirst is, by this logic, the one of which we should be most suspicious. Sometimes too, like atomic fallout, the influence of the despairing philosophies of our culture gets through to us. We sincerely tremble as if the whole house of love is a house of cards — just too good to be true.

Introspection moves in a similar circle. Who does not *feel* that life without love is a life of diminishing fervor, for children as for those of us who pretend to be adults? Who doubts that the raw, fragmental love of the world is not enough? We see something of ourselves in the plays and on the screen. It is a time of terrible disillusion. Thence comes the groan in literature: the themes of loneliness, monotony, boredom, nausea, anxiety, dread, troubled sleep, and death.

This cultural moan was anticipated by the Prophet, or rather, by Him who inspired him.

⁸⁵ Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City, 1909), p. 68.

I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Junior.⁸⁶

Is there a way out, or, at least, up? The Prophet said, "All will suffer until they obey Christ Himself."⁸⁷

And so we return to the beginning, to the real Christ, the living Christ, the Christ who manifests Himself now, not a mythical Jesus who was, but the Christ who is. "The Savior," the Prophet said, "has the words of eternal life. Nothing else can profit us."⁸⁸

In all history there may not have been, except for David and Jonathan, a pair of men more closely bound by brotherly and godly affection than were Joseph and Hyrum. William Taylor, describing how they looked whenever they met each other, says it was deep looking to deep, "the same expression of supreme joy." When Joseph craved the privilege of pioneering the Rocky Mountains and was turned by the clamor of his own to the road to Carthage, Hyrum was first to volunteer to go. "If you go, I will go with you," said Joseph, "but we shall be butchered." Later, having predicted with certainty his then imminent death, Joseph at least three times pled for Hyrum to leave. "I want Hyrum to live." But each time Hyrum could only reply, "Joseph, I cannot leave you."⁸⁹

Mother Smith came on that fateful day to view the inert bodies of her two sons (unaware that her son, Samuel, as a result of a related mobbing, was on his deathbed); she says she seemed to hear them speak. Mere motherly delirium? Perhaps. But listen to what she seemed to hear:

Mother, weep not for us. We have overcome the world by love. We carried to them the Gospel that their souls might be saved. They slew us for our testimony and they have placed us beyond their power. Their ascendancy is for a moment. Ours is an eternal triumph.⁹⁰

Every man must make up his mind whether Hyrum's lifetime closeness makes him the most creditable witness the Prophet had — or the least. He knew him from his birth to a few seconds before his death. (It was Hyrum who held Joseph as a boy through weeks

⁸⁶ Doctrine and Covenants, 1:17.

⁸⁷ *Teachings*, p. 357; cf. pp. 321, 323.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 364. (Italics mine.)

⁸⁹ *Teachings*, p. 364. The grandson of Hyrum Smith, President Joseph Fielding Smith, believes that if Oliver Cowdery had been faithful, he, not Hyrum, would have died at Carthage, a joint witness to the death with the Prophet. But all the promises and keys and gifts once conferred on Oliver were conferred on Hyrum. (Doctrine and Covenants 124:95.)

⁹⁰ Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* (Salt Lake City, 1945), p. 325.

of bone pain when there were no sedatives or anesthetic.) This, in a sentence, is the testimony he has left for mankind to ponder.

"There were prophets before. But Joseph has the spirit and power of all the prophets."⁴¹

The spirit and power of all the prophets is the spirit and power of Jesus Christ, and His Spirit is the spirit and power of pure love, "the chief characteristic of Deity." It is the mission of Jesus Christ to bring into the world again and again the sunshine of light and warmth that is love. By our literal descent and by our redeemed ascent through Christ, we are fully begotten and loved of God the Eternal Father. If we will only respond to what He has given and *now gives*, we will grow in the nurture of perfected love.

* * *

I cannot close without a personal testimony. I know what those who despair are talking about, those who say with Bertrand Russell, "Such a thing as Christian love is impossible." I know the arguments. But I have witnessed refutation in experience. I bear testimony that the Prophet Joseph Smith and his heirs have lived to love and died to love, and that because of them we have capacities and privileges for love beyond our present conception. I bear that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

⁴¹ Smith, *History of the Church*, VI, 346.

So nations crucify their moral rebels with their criminals upon the same Golgotha, not being able to distinguish between the moral idealism which surpasses and the antisocial conduct which falls below that mediocrity on the level of which every society unifies its life.

Reinhold Niebuhr