

Statement of Principles (Eternal Progression)

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another.

It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did;

Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me.

When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.

These excerpts from Joseph Smith's discourse of April 7th 1844 outline the core principles of the eternal progression of mankind. *The glory of God is intelligence, in other words light and truth.* We believe that men and women are either moving forward and upwards by gathering to themselves greater light and knowledge or distancing themselves from God by abandoning truth and embracing darkness. The good news, or in other words the gospel truth, is that upward progression is possible in and through at-one-ment with Jesus Christ who God The Father sent down to this world to redeem those who are His.

We believe that the first ordinance of our coming to know God in this life is baptism by immersion in anticipation of receiving the Holy Ghost. Baptism must be preceded by faith in Jesus Christ or in other words belief in He who is not seen. Faith produces true repentance. More adequately explained, our faith in and desire to know Jesus Christ produces the necessary change of the heart/mind. It is this cosmic shift in one's belief structure that allows them to be taught by the holy spirit. It is by faith and true repentance that one would desire baptism and through this that one is able to receive the Holy Ghost. Baptism must result in the receipt of the Holy Ghost or it is inefficacious. Through the study of holy writings such as the Book of Mormon that

truthfully account for mens' dealings with God we learn that this is the true and simple doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Receipt of the Holy Ghost enables one to begin to commune directly with Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost teaches all that one must do to know Him. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper outlines this process. We take into our bodies the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, to always remember Him and keep His commandments which He has given us individually. To keep His commandments means that those who love Jesus Christ stand watch awaiting his personal instruction. By so doing and once the Lord has thoroughly proved this person, and finds that they are determined to serve Him at all hazards, then that person will find their calling and their election made sure, then it will be their privilege to receive the Lord as explained in John chapter 14:12-27. As the Savior has said "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Then it will be the privilege of that individual to receive instruction in person from the Lord Himself. That instruction would most certainly include information to help the individual learn how to become a god and move through the heavens to the throne of God to dwell with the gods in everlasting glory.

These are our guiding principles. Jesus Christ is the opener of the way of progression. The keeper of the gate to heaven is the Holy One of Israel, even Jesus Christ, and he employs no servant there. It is of the utmost import that this basic knowledge be preserved and passed on to our posterity.

We who desire to be God's people necessarily interact with one another in various ways and at various times as we go about our journey in this life. We desire to adopt as our custom and habit the instruction of the Lord when he said that the first great commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We believe no other clarification is required to guide our interpersonal conduct, however the following precepts are presented for clarity regarding the performances of the ordinances described in this document.

- To maintain order and continuity of basic teachings when dealing with others outside one's family, only those men having been appropriately ordained to priesthood, having received the gift and calling of God to the same, and having been sustained by seven women (one of whom should be the man's wife if he is married) should perform the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper for persons who are outside their family.
- Baptism should be performed by immersion in living water in this manner. Go down and stand in the water, call the person by name and say "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then immerse them in the water, and bring them out of the water.
- The prayers found in the Book of Moroni, the last book of the Book of Mormon, should be used to bless the Lord's Supper.

- A vote of 12 women is required to revoke the authority of a man who has been sustained to officiate in baptism and the Lord's Supper outside his own family. The women voting must be adequately acquainted with the man, and such action should only be taken after two witnesses have spoken against the man and the man has had an opportunity to speak and call his own witnesses.

- Marriage is to be between one man and one woman.