
Isaiah 58

Observance of the true spirit of fasting and Sabbath day observance is enjoined. This whole prophecy breathes, as Birks says, “. . . an implied prophecy of the Pharisaism, which would succeed idolatry as the master evil among the Jews, and also of the prevalence of like evils in the later times of the Gospel.” Wade furthermore has: “[ISAIAH] 58 is directed against insincere formalism, as exhibited by those who mortified themselves by fasts but put no curb on their rapacity or their inhumanity . . . Not bodily prostrations and fleshly austerities but acts of unselfishness and humanity are the essential conditions of obtaining Divine favour.” There are few evils that are more abhorrent to the Lord than hypocrisy.

There seem to be two very opposite extremes in terms of fasting and prayer. Formalism devoid of the proper attitude on the one hand; on the other, we have a misunderstanding regarding the need for fasting and Sabbath day observance in modern times. There is a need for both humanity *and* the observance of these laws in the Lord’s way.

We see parallel teachings in terms of the payment of tithing: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, *and not to leave the other undone*” (Matthew 23:23, emphasis added).

Today, there seems to be all but a total abandonment of Sabbath day worship. It is interesting how some conversations seem to stick with us forever. As an adolescent, growing up in Chile in the 1960s, before I knew about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I remember hearing that the father of a friend had taught that not observing the Sabbath day was not in keeping with God’s will. I was shocked by the comment. I did not know anybody who kept the Sabbath day holy.

It was truly a pleasure for me to be taught about this practice as I learned about the Church. Not too many years later I watched the documentary movie *Chariots of Fire*. It chronicled the lives of several UK athletes in the 1920s. At that time, it seems that Sabbath day observance was honored by devout Christians. One of the athletes, Eric Liddell refused to run on the Sabbath day. In one very moving scene, Liddell tells a young man who was playing ball on Sunday, “Do you know what day it is?” And then Eric kindly admonishes the young man, “The Sabbath is not a day for playing ball, is it?” I love this movie for many reasons, and it did not hurt that Isaiah 40 was quoted in it.

As I write almost a hundred years after the 1920s, it seems that Sabbath day observance has all but vanished from even those denominations that kept the Sabbath day holy. Instead, the Sabbath has turned into a day of shopping and recreation. The clear and joyous teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stand out as a breath of fresh air in terms of Sabbath-day observance as well as those on the law of the fast. Countless Latter-day Saints have refused “to play ball” on Sunday and their examples shine forth to the world.

vv. 1-2. One of the callings of a prophet is to set things right in the Church. The Lord, through Isaiah, has spoken about the needed repentance regarding fasting and Sabbath-day observance. Similarly today, one the Prophets, Seers and Revelators, President Russell M. Nelson, has recently admonished us as a Church to be more faithful in our Sabbath-day observances. False religion is rejected.

1 ¶ CRY aloud, ✓ spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

✓ with the throat

CRY aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Cry aloud (literally, ‘cry with the

throat’), O prophet, spare not, lift up thy voice like the voice of a trumpet.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Cry aloud and spare not; raise thy voice like a trumpet.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *cease* rather than *spare*. Cowles has: “The Lord addresses his prophet, giving his message and instructions. —‘Cry from the throat’ [Hebrew] in distinction from whispering out of the lips; speak with loud and earnest tones . . .” Rabbi Rosenberg clarifies, “raise the voice *like* a shofar” [כְּשׁוֹפָר].

Rabbis Slotki/Rosenberg have the idea of not sparing the throat to cry out. Alexander has: “The loudness of the call is intended to suggest the importance of the subject, and perhaps the insensibility of those to be convinced.” ¶ *And shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the first clause, “And shew unto my people their rebellion.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Proclaim to my people their sins, and to the house of Jacob their iniquities.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *wicked doings* instead of

transgression. By the words *my people* it becomes clear that the Lord is speaking to Israel.

2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And they seek daily instruction from me, as if to know the ways which are right before me.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Day after day they seek me, and desire to know my ways.” Instead of *delight*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *wish* (Lamsa) / *pretending* (BPE). Wade suggests: “The verb *seek* is used of consulting God through either priest or prophet (cf. ISAIAH 31:1, Ezekiel 20:3).” Cheyne also, “‘Consult’ is the usual word for applying to an oracle or a prophet, and no doubt consultations of the prophet are included (see Ezekiel 20:1), but direct prayer to God is also meant (see Isaiah 58:4 and comp. 55:6).” ¶ Cowles has: “This verse describes them as professing to seek God and even as pretending to inquire after justice and righteousness—the very principles which they most of all outraged and trampled under foot in their oppressive ways of life.” Redak, in Rabbi Rosenberg suggests that those who ask for instruction with no intention of obeying are in particular trouble. This reminds us of the men who asked Jeremiah if they should go to Egypt or stay, but their hearts were not sincere (see Jeremiah 42-43). ¶ Regarding *my ways* [”וַיְרַבֵּן”], Wade points us to ISAIAH 2:3, 42:24, cf. 48:17. In Moses 6:41b we read, “And my father taught me in all the ways of God.” In Hosea we also read, “For the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them” (Hosea 14:9b). The Scriptures often speak of either *perverting* the ways of the Lord or *walking* therein. ¶ President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “We may after baptism and confirmation become companions of the Holy Ghost who will teach us the ways of the Lord, quicken our minds and help us to understand the truth . . . But the ways of the Lord are not man’s ways . . . [The Latter-day Saints] are being gathered from all parts of the earth and are coming to the house of the Lord in these valleys of the mountains. Here they are being taught in the ways of the Lord through the restoration of the gospel and by receiving blessings in the temples now erected.”¹ *To know my ways* generally means to study the commandments with a desire both to know and to do the will of God. There are times, however, and this

¹ President Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*.

seems one of them, when people are only *hearers* rather than *doers* of the word (see James 1:22). ¶ *As a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God*: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Finding delight in my presence as a people that doeth righteousness, and have not forsaken the judgment of their God.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Like a people who have practised righteousness, and who have not forsaken the ordinance of God.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “As a nation that hath done justice, and hath not forsaken the judgment of their God.” The word for *ordinance* in Hebrew, as Cheyne points out, is מִשְׁפָּט. It is often translated as *statute* (Bishops, Geneva) or *judgment* (ESV, LEB, LITV) or *justice* (HCSB, Rotherham). The Lord seems to be saying, “You seek for my advice as someone who is ready to *obey* it, but in reality you have turned from me and have apostatized.” ¶ Birks has: “The main feature is a pretended eagerness to learn the commands and will of God, as shewn in ceremonial details, and still a neglect of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. —The verbs which express the actions of these hypocrites are in the future tense. The verse may be paraphrased thus; And they will seek me day by day, and will delight to know the ways that please me in manner and appearance like a nation which has wrought righteousness habitually (as they have not) . . . They will ask me the ordinances of justice [without the least thought of doing them] . . .” In other words, *they draw near God only with their lips*.² So also Wordsworth, who quotes Ezekiel: “They come unto thee, and sit before thee as My People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness” (Ezekiel 33:31). ¶ *They ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They ask of me judgment and truth, as if they delighted to draw near to the fear of the Lord.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “They now ask of me a just decision and desire to draw near to God.” Instead of *delight in approaching*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *delight in drawing near* (Lamsa) / *pretending to draw near* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “They ask of me the judgments of justice: they are willing to approach to God.” Rawlinson has, in part: “*They take delight in*

² The Prophet Joseph Smith shared these thoughts: “My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof’” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18-19).

approaching to God] So the LXX (Ⓔ), the Vulgate (Ⓕ), Calvin, Vitringa, and Kay.” Gill says: “. . . the approaching here is only in an external manner, by the performance of outward duties; and the delight is not in God, and communion with him.”

vv. 3-7. In 1963, Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg noted: “It is here that I would like to state that the Lord has caused a day of fasting and prayer to be set up in this day so that collectively the Church might join together to fulfil the purposes of fasting. In the general letter from the Council of the Twelve to the Church under date of May 17, 1845, which Orson Pratt read to the Saints, these words appear: ‘Let this be an ensample to all saints, and there will never be any lack for bread: When the poor are starving, let those who have, fast one day and give what they otherwise would have eaten to the bishops for the poor, and everyone will abound for a long time; and this is one great and important principle of fasts, approved of the Lord. And so long as the saints will all live to this principle, with glad hearts and cheerful countenances they will always have an abundance.’ (DHC 7:413.) . . . I feel to add that those who are not physically able to abstain from food and drink should participate on fast day to the extent of prayers, offerings, and testimony. If we abide by the word of the Lord for the above purposes, we will surely be blessed as God has promised through his prophets. I suppose there is no physical blessing desired so much as being well in mind and in body . . . Today with the Church having reached the age of 133 years, we marvel at its growth; and with the strength of its leadership, we are moving forward. Yet as we examine ourselves, we see there is much need for improvement. I think of the Prophet Isaiah’s words when he said: ‘Cry aloud, spare not lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’ I observe a great need for the teaching and adherence to the principle of fasting. I would like to say something relative to it. As a Church, we have not reached the full benefits of this principle. There are some who faithfully observe the fast and who receive the full blessings. But there are many who must yet be taught the true principle of fasting and be converted to it and practice it in order to receive the great blessings associated with it. The Prophet Isaiah clearly sets forth an understanding of the fast. As he observed the people, he was, no doubt, considerably upset and concerned with the way they had abused the purpose and principle of fasting.”³ Elder L. Tom Perry taught, “The law of the fast has three great purposes. First, it provides assistance to the needy through the contribution of fast offerings, consisting of the value of meals from which we abstain. Second, a

³ Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, A Glorious Principle, *Conference Report*, April 1963.

fast is beneficial to us physically. Third, it is to increase humility and spirituality on the part of each individual.”⁴ President Joseph F. Smith taught: “Now, while the law requires the Saints in all the world to fast from ‘even to even’ and to abstain both from food and drink, it can easily be seen from the Scriptures, and especially from the words of Jesus, that it is more important to obtain the true spirit of love for God and man, ‘purity of heart and simplicity of intention,’ than it is to carry out the cold letter of the law. The Lord has instituted the fast on a reasonable and intelligent basis, and none of his works are vain or unwise. His law is perfect in this as in other things. Hence, those who can are required to comply thereto; it is a duty from which they cannot escape; but let it be remembered that the observance of the fast day by abstaining twenty-four hours from food and drink is not an absolute rule, it is no iron-clad law to us, but it is left with the people as a matter of conscience, to exercise wisdom and discretion. Many are subject to weakness, others are delicate in health, and others have nursing babies; of such it should not be required to fast. Neither should parents compel their little children to fast. I have known children to cry for something to eat on fast day. In such cases, going without food will do them no good. Instead, they dread the day to come, and in place of hailing it, dislike it; while the compulsion engenders a spirit of rebellion in them, rather than a love for the Lord and their fellows. Better to teach them the principle, and let them observe it when they are old enough to choose intelligently, than to so compel them. But those should fast who can, and all classes among us should be taught to save the meals which they would eat, or their equivalent, for the poor.”⁵

3 ¶ Wherefore have we fasted, [say they], and thou seest not? [wherefore] have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. ✓

✓ or, things wherewith ye grieve others, HEB. griefs

Wherefore have we fasted, [say they], and thou seest not? The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “They say, wherefore do we fast, as it is revealed before Thee?” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Saying, ‘Why have we fasted and thou hast not seen?’” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓕ) has, “Why have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded?” Birks suggests: “The complaint is that they had made God largely their

⁴ Elder L. Tom Perry, “The Law of the Fast.” April 1986 General Conference.

⁵ President Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 306-307.

debtor, and that the debt was unpaid. Religious pride breeds discontent, and discontent open blasphemy.” Cheyne notes: “*Wherefore have we fasted*] The reproofs in this part of the prophecy remind us of Zechariah 7:5, Joel 2:12, 13.” Alexander suggests: “The combination of the preterite (hast not seen) and the future (wilt not know) includes all time. The clause describes Jehovah as indifferent and inattentive to their laboured austerities. The reason given is analogous to that for the rejection of their sacrifices in ISAIAH 1:11–13, viz. the combination of their formal service with unhallowed practice.” ¶ President Marion G. Romney taught: “The apostle James said, ‘If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well’ (James 2:8). We must have this law in mind in all that we do in our welfare work. We must love our neighbors as ourselves. The Savior put this law second only to the love of God . . . In the payment of our fast offerings, we must do so with the royal law in mind.”⁶ President Romney further testified: “One of the important things the Lord has told us to do is to be liberal in our payment of fast offerings. I would like you to know that there are great rewards for so doing—both spiritual and temporal rewards. The Lord says that the efficacy of our prayers depends upon our liberality to the poor. Way back in the days of Isaiah, he made this clear. When at that time the people complained, ‘Wherefore have we fasted . . . and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?’”⁷ ¶ [*Wherefore*] have we afflicted our soul [עֲנִינוּ נַפְשֵׁינוּ], and thou takest no knowledge? The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Wherefore have we afflicted ourselves, as known unto Thee?” The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “We have humbled our souls and thou hast not known.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice?” Rawlinson has: “*And thou takest no knowledge*] rather, *no notice*.” ¶ Kay explains: “They observe the Day of Atonement, the only fast-day enjoined by the law; on which every Israelite was required to ‘afflict his soul’ (Leviticus 16:29⁸, 31⁹). But their day of soul-afflicting has not produced its proper fruits, contrition and charity. They censure God; they oppress men.” And furthermore, Kay explains: “The sabbatical and jubilee years (when servants and debtors obtained release) began on the evening of the *Day of Atonement* (Leviticus 25:9).” The Old Testament is quite clear on the importance of forgiving debts during the jubilee and

even warns against those who would not lend when it was close to the year of jubilee. ¶ *Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The prophet said unto them: Behold, in the day of your fast ye seek your extortions (or, ‘gain’), and ye bring near all your stumbling-blocks.” The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “In the very days of your fasts you enjoy your own pleasures and goad all them who are under your control.” I particularly like NASB here: “Behold, on the day of your fast you find *your* desire, And drive hard all your workers.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has “Behold, in the day of your fast you do what you wish, and you present offerings to all of your idols.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found, and you exact of all your debtors.” Horsley, also, leaning on the LXX (Ⓥ), prefers: “And exact the whole upon your debtors.” In other words, they are *unforgiving* to their debtors. ¶ Wade has, “The Lord’s answer to their appeal is that their acts of self-denial are purely external, and that their fast-days do not interfere with their interests, or bring relief to their workmen.” Cheyne has: “Unlike the Sabbath, the fast-days (except the great Day of Atonement) appear not to have involved the cessation of business. Hence the prophet continues, *All your tasks ye exact*] Ye are specially anxious at such times that the service of God should not interfere with that of mammon. Ye ‘exact’ the full tale¹⁰ of works, like slave-drivers (the participle of the verb has this meaning, see Exodus 5:6, Job 3:18).” ¶ Rawlinson’s view is: “In the day of your fast ye find pleasure. Delitzsch and Mr. Cheyne render, ‘ye carry on business,’ which accords better with the clause which follows. The great Day of Atonement was, like the sabbath, a day on which no work was to be done (Leviticus 16:29). The Jews, while priding themselves on their observance of the day, did not really observe it in this particular. **And exact all your labours**; *i.e.* ‘require of your servants and subordinates all the services that they have to render on other days.’ Days of religious observance, even under the Law, were always intended to be days of kindly forbearance towards the poor, of the remission of burdens, or even of the actual giving of relief.”

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as [ye do this] day, ✓ to make your voice to be heard on high.

✓ or, ye fast not as this day

⁶ President Marion G. Romney, The Royal Law of Love, April 1978 General Conference.

⁷ President Marion G. Romney, Fundamental Welfare Services, April 1979 General Conference.

⁸ אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם תְּעַנּוּ, afflict your souls.

⁹ אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם תְּעַנּוּ, and ye shall afflict your souls.

¹⁰ Tale, from the Hebrew תָּקַן is defined, in *Easton Bible Dictionary*: “(1.) HEB. ‘a task,’ as weighed and measured out = tally, i.e., the number told off; the full number (Exodus 5:18; see 1Samuel 18:27; 1Chronicles 9:28). In Ezekiel 45:11 rendered ‘measure.’”

Behold, ye fast for strife and debate. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, ye fast for provocation and strife.” Instead of *debate*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *quarreling* (Lamsa) / *conflict* (BPE). Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg suggested, regarding this verse, “Or in other words as a result they are rewarded with strife, debate, and wickedness.”¹¹ Alexander has: “Vitranga applies this clause to the doctrinal divisions among Protestants, and more particularly to the controversies in the Church of Holland on the subject of grace and predestination.” The *actual topic* of contention is not as vital as to the fact that contention takes place in the name of God. Nothing could be more distasteful to God than when people contend in His name. A modern expression for the same phenomena is “Bible bashing.” ¶ *And to smite with the fist of wickedness:* The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “And smite the poor with your fists.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “And to strike violently” and the BPE (Ⓢ) has “And to inflict the violence of iniquity.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And strike with the fist wickedly.” Redak, in Rabbi Rosenberg, suggests that those who fasted would not forgive debts and even used their fists [פְּאַיִתָּם], if necessary, in order to collect. The ASV has, “Behold, ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.” ¶ *Ye shall not fast as [ye do this] day, to make your voice to be heard on high.* The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “Why fast ye for me as to-day that by a cry your voice may be heard?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high.” Wade suggests, “*ye fast not this day*, etc. Better (as in the mg. ||), *ye shall not fast as ye do this day so as to make*, etc.” Cheyne notes: “This glaring inconsistency prevents your prayers for a Divine interposition (ISAIAH 58:2) from rising to the pure ‘height,’ where Jehovah dwelleth (ISAIAH 57:15 Hebr.). Comp. Lamentations 3:44, ‘Thou hast covered thyself with clouds, so that prayer may not pass through.’”

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? ¶ [is it] to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes [under him]? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

✓ or, to afflict his soul for a day?

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Is this the fast which I delight in?” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “This is not such a fast as I have chosen.” This is a rhetorical construction meaning that, *no*; these things

¹¹ Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, A Glorious Principle, *Conference Report*, April 1963.

were *opposite* to the purposes of the fast. ¶ *A day for a man to afflict his soul?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “A day to afflict oneself?” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “That a man should afflict his soul for a day.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “For a man to afflict his soul for a day?” Barnes explains: “. . . the idea is, that the pain and inconvenience experienced by the abstinence from food was not the end in view in fasting. This seems to have been the mistake which they made, that they supposed there was something meritorious in the very pain incurred by such abstinence.” Faussett explains: “The *pain* felt by abstinence is not the *end* to be sought, as if it were meritorious; it is of value only in so far as it leads us to amend our ways.” And to take notice of those around us who are afflicted. ¶ *[Is it] to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes [under him]?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the second half, “And passing the night in sackcloth and ashes?” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “No: though thou shouldst bend thy neck like a hook and lay sackcloth and ashes under thee.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Is this it, to wind his head about like a circle, and to spread sackcloth and ashes?” Ibn Ezra explains: “*Bulrush*” A tender plant, that bends its top.” Barnes has: “A bulrush is the large reed that grows in marshy places. It is, says Johnson, without knots or joints. In the midst of water it grows luxuriantly, yet the stalk is not solid or compact like wood, and, being unsupported by joints, it easily bends over under its own weight. it thus becomes the emblem of a man bowed down with grief. Here it refers to the sanctimoniousness of a hypocrite when fasting—a man without real feeling who puts on an air of affected solemnity, and ‘appears to others to fast.’” Rashi and Kara, in Rabbi Rosenberg, suggest individuals bent over like a *fishhook* rather than a bulrush. Faussett has: “*bow ... head ... sackcloth*”—to affect the outward tokens, so as to ‘appear to men to fast.’” Rabbis Slotki/Rosenberg point out that these are external signs of mourning. Kent P. Jackson powerfully summarizes: “Fasting is not a passive act, for in order to be efficacious it must be accompanied by righteous living and charity demonstrated not only through fast offerings but through daily living and interaction with our fellowmen.”¹² Christ did not abolish fasting, but pointed His disciples in the right direction: “But thou, *when thou fastest*, anoint thine head, and wash thy face” (Matthew 6:17). ¶ Barnes explains of sackcloth: “It was commonly worn around the loins in times of fasting and of any public or private calamity. It was also customary to sit on sackcloth, or to spread it under one either to lie on, or to kneel on in times of prayer, as an expression of humiliation.” When Jonah preached to the children of Nineveh they repented: “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on

¹² Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture*, 4:158.

sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent,¹³ and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (Jonah 3:5-10). Another great example is that of such ‘repentance,’ came from King Ahab, who had truly done wickedly: “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house” (1Kings 21:27-29). There was nothing inherently wrong with fasting in sackcloth and ashes in olden times. It was a question of sincerity. ¶ *Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Will ye call this a fast before the presence of the Lord, and a day in which I delight?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Even in that case you are not to call it an acceptable fast.” Once again, a rhetorical construction meaning *no*; such a fast was far removed from what the Lord had in mind. The word *acceptable*, רָצוֹן, is related to the concept of *justification*. We read also of שָׁפָּטָה: “And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Genesis 4:4b-5a). For any *performance* to find favor in the sight of God, to be acceptable in His sight, or be justified, the Holy Spirit of Promise must put a sealing stamp of approval upon it: “All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, *performances*, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead . . .” (D&C 132:7).

¹³ The word translated as *repent* [נָחַם] in the KJV, means to *take pity* (Gesenius) or be *filled with mercy*. Also see the two JST readings in this passage, making it clear that this is the meaning of the word נָחַם.

6 [Is] not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, ✓ and to let the oppressed ✓ go free, and that ye break every yoke?

✓ the bundles of the yoke

✓ ✓ broken

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, beginning with the second clause, “To scatter the assembly of wickedness, to loose the fetters of a decree of perverted judgment, to set at liberty the sons of the freeborn, who have suffered violence, and to remove all perverted judgment?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “It is not such a fast as this that I have chosen, saith the Lord. But loose every bond of iniquity; dissolve the obligations of onerous contracts; set at liberty them who are oppressed, and tear in pieces every unjust stipulation in writing.” Instead of *undo the heavy burdens*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *cut off the bands of treachery* (Lamsa) / *break the burdens of deceit* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second half, “Undo the bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden.” Faussett has: “*Undo heavy burdens*] ‘Hebrew, ‘loose the bands of the yoke.’” Wade explains, “The true fast has for its sphere the field of social duty and consists in abstinence from oppressing the weak and in the provision of relief for the destitute: cf. Isaiah 32:6, Ezekiel 18:7-9, Zechariah 8:16, 17, Job 31:13, 14 . . . *the bands of the yoke*] In strictness, the thongs which fastened the yoke (or *yoke bar*) to the neck (cf. Jeremiah 2:20, 27:2), but here used of any oppressive imposition. . . *naked*], i.e. half-clad (the term having the same qualified sense as in Isaiah 20:2; cf. γυμνός in James 2:15, 16).” Ibn Ezra has: “מוטה *Yoke*. Comp. מושות עלכם ‘the bands of your yoke’ (Leviticus 26:13¹⁴ [*Rain in Due Season*—GB]). *To loose the bands*, etc. To make the slaves free.” Cheyne explains: “*To untie the thongs of the yoke*] Metaphorically, of course. The elaborate and merciful legislation for the protection of Hebrew slaves (Exodus 21:2 &c., Deuteronomy 15:12 &c., Leviticus 25:39 &c.) appears to have been long a dead letter (see Jeremiah 34:8-22). . . *To set them that are crushed*] In the spirit of him who cherishes the ‘crushed reed’ (ISAIAH 42:3, same word).” Skinner has: “*to undo the bands* (or knots) of the *yoke*] The yoke was fixed on the neck of the ox by two wooden pins, one on either side, which were tied below with a thong (Post, *Pal. Expl. Fund St.*¹⁵, 1891, p. 112).” Alexander points out that some

¹⁴ *And broken* the bands of your yoke, נֶאֱשַׁר מִשַׁת עַלְכֶם.

¹⁵ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* for 1891, URL accessed 11 September 2016, see beautiful drawings of agricultural

tied some of these verses to the release of bondsmen as required in Sabbatical years: “It is evident, however, that the terms were so selected as to be descriptive of oppression universally [i.e., not just release of bondmen]; to make which still more evident, the Prophet adds a general command or exhortation, Ye shall break every yoke.” ¶ Elder Carl B. Pratt noted: “If we fast and pray with the purpose of repenting of sins and overcoming personal weaknesses, surely we are seeking to ‘loose the bands of wickedness’ in our lives. If the purpose of our fast is to be more effective in teaching the gospel and serving others in our Church callings, we are surely striving to ‘undo the heavy burdens’ of others. If we are fasting and praying for the Lord’s help in our missionary efforts, aren’t we desiring to ‘let the oppressed go free’? If the purpose of our fast is to increase our love for our fellow man and overcome our selfishness, our pride, and having our hearts set upon the things of this world, surely we are seeking to ‘break every yoke.’”¹⁶

7 [Is it] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

✓ or, afflicted

[Is it] not to *deal* thy bread to the hungry. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Shouldst not thou sustain the hungry with thy bread.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Deal out thy bread to the hungry.” Instead of *deal*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *share*. LITV (also see LEB, Rotherham, MKJV) has: “*Is it* not to break your bread to the hungry.” Cheyne explains regarding פָּרַק, “*To break thy bread*] Alluding to the oval cakes which formed the Jewish bread.” Kay has: “Delitzsch notices that in the primitive Church¹⁷ fasting was always accompanied by almsgiving.” ¶ President Dieter F. Uchtdorf powerfully testified: “Whether we are rich or poor, regardless of where we live on this globe, we all need each other, for it is in sacrificing our time, talents, and resources that our spirits mature and become refined. This work of providing in the Lord’s way is not simply another item in the catalog of programs of the Church. It cannot be neglected or set aside. It is central to our doctrine; it is the essence of our religion. Brethren, it is our great and special

privilege as priesthood holders to put the priesthood to work. We must not turn aside our hearts or our heads from becoming more self-reliant, caring better for the needy, and rendering compassionate service. The temporal is intertwined with the spiritual. God has given us this mortal experience and the temporal challenges that attend it as a laboratory where we can grow into the beings Heavenly Father wants us to become.”¹⁸ ¶ *And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And bring the poor that are cast out, into the midst of thy house?” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And take into thy house the poor who have no shelter.” Instead of *poor*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *stranger*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And bring the needy and the harbourless¹⁹ into thy house.” Kay explains: “The cast out” are the *homeless*. Barnes, leaning on the margin ¶ gives a more encompassing definition: “Margin ¶, ‘Afflicted’ Hospitality to all, and especially to the friendless and the stranger, was one of the cardinal virtues in the Oriental code of morals.” The expression reminds us of that question put to the Savior, “And who is my neighbour?” ¶ *When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him.* The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “If thou seest one naked, clothe him.” Gill has: “. . . one that is thinly clothed, whose clothes are scarce anything but rags, not sufficient to keep him warm, or preserve him from the inclemencies of the weather; put a better garment upon him, to cover him with.” ¶ *And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And shouldst not hide thine eyes from the kindred who is thy flesh?” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And look not scornfully on dependants of thy race.” Instead of *hide not*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *refuse not* (Lamsa) / *not be negligent* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And despise not thy own flesh.” Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg noted, “He meant that in addition to taking care of the poor, that we should watch over our own kin and be responsible for our father, mother, brother, and sister when they are in need.”²⁰ Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke extensively on the topic of caring for aging parents, permitting them to “preserve their independence as long as possible,” and of regrettable abuses. Speaking of the abuses, Elder Oaks said: “I believe this was the kind of circumstance the Lord’s spokesman, the prophet Isaiah, thundered against when he commanded, “Hide not thyself from thine own flesh.”²¹

implements including the yoke as part of a plow system (pp. 112-113), at <https://archive.org/details/quarterlystateme23pale>

¹⁶ Elder Carl B. Pratt, “The Blessings of a Proper Fast,” October 2004 General Conference.

¹⁷ The Church as it existed at the time of Christ and right after, before the apostasy. In other words, The Church of Jesus Christ as described in the New Testament.

¹⁸ President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Providing in the Lord’s Way,” October 2011 General Conference.

¹⁹ Those without a harbor or homeless.

²⁰ Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, A Glorious Principle, *Conference Report*, April 1963.

²¹ Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother.” April 1991 General Conference.

vv. 8-12. These verses refer to the promises made to those who keep the proper fast, but like so many other blessings, can be generalized to the keeping of the commandments of God. Elder Spencer W. Kimball spoke at General Conference and said, “If we can walk now by faith, if we can believe in the rich promises of God, if we can obey and patiently wait, the Lord will fulfil all his rich promises to us: ‘. . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him’ (1 Cor. 2:9). The blessings following righteousness are enjoyed both in mortality and in eternity. Hear the words of the Savior: ‘And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life’ (Matt. 19:29). * * * Extravagant rewards are offered. Blessings beyond one’s understanding will come. The land will yield bounteously and peace shall abound. The unfaithful, proud, and wealthy can never enjoy the sweet savor of the rewards for fasting and dispensing to the poor: ‘Then [if you live these commandments] shall thy light break forth as the morning and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.... then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noon day: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not’ (Isaiah 58:8-11).”²² After quoting ISAIAH 58, President Henry B. Eyring said: “So the Lord has given us a simple commandment with a marvelous promise. In the Church today we are offered the opportunity to fast once a month and give a generous fast offering through our bishop or branch president for the benefit of the poor and the needy. Some of what you give will be used to help those around you, perhaps someone in your own family. The Lord’s servants will pray and fast for the revelation to know whom to help and what help to give. That which is not needed to help people in your local Church unit will become available to bless other Church members across the world who are in need.”²³ Perhaps my favorite of all these quotes comes from then Elder Spencer W. Kimball, regarding these great blessings promised in ISAIAH 58:8-11, “What more could one ask? The companionship of the Lord, light and knowledge, health and vigor, constant guidance by the

²² Elder Spencer W. Kimball, April 1952 General Conference, p. 23.

²³ President Henry B. Eyring, “Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?” April 2015 General Conference.

Lord as an eternal never-failing spring. What more could one desire?”²⁴

8 ¶ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. ✓

✓ gather thee up

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Then shall thy light be revealed like the early dawn.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Then shall thy light break forth like the morning.” Skinner explains, “By a vivid metaphor the dawn was conceived as ‘splitting’ the heavens and flooding the world with light. The same word occurs on the Moabite Stone (line 15) in the phrase ‘from the splitting of the dawn.’” So also the NASB, “Then your light will break out like the dawn.” Light represents knowledge as revealed by the Holy Ghost. This is particularly notable after a night of darkness, when the dawn comes forth. ¶ *And thine health shall spring forth speedily:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And the healing of thy wound shall appear quickly.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And thy remedies shall spring up speedily.” Instead of *health*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *righteousness*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And thy health shall speedily arise.” ASV renders it: “and thy *healing* shall spring forth speedily” (emphasis added). The word healing, or the concept of healing, is used by most translators. The healing of our sins and the healing of our bodies are closely associated with each other: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, *they shall be forgiven him*” (James 5:14-15, emphasis added). Gill, who died about half a century before the Gospel was restored, speaks of the restoration of the Gospel after the day of apostasy: “. . . as the herbs and grass out of the earth, by clear shining after rain; by which is meant the healthful and sound state of the church in the latter day, when all divisions shall be healed; contentions and animosities cease; sound doctrine preached; the ordinances administered according to their original institution; true discipline restored; and all the parts of worship performed, according to the rule of the divine word; and so the souls of men, under all these means, be in thriving and flourishing circumstances.” Gill, then, uses ארִיכָה not of the *healing* of a wound, but of the healing of Israel’s

²⁴ Elder Spencer W. Kimball, “‘Tis Not Vain to Serve the Lord.” April 1952 General Conference.

relationship with God. Similarly, Barnes has: “The Hebrew word used here, (אַרְוִיכָה), means properly ‘a long bandage’ (from אָרַךְ, ‘to make long’), such as is applied by surgeons to heal a wound. It is then used to denote the healing which is secured by the application of the bandage; and figuratively here means their restoration from all the calamities which had been inflicted on the nation. The word rendered ‘spring forth’ (from צִמְחָה) properly relates to the manner in which plants **germinate**. Here the sense is, that if they would return to God, they would be delivered from the calamities which [apostasy] had brought on them, and that peace and prosperity would again visit the nation.” ¶ “Thy light break forth” has reference to an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God, a Urim and Thummim or “Lights and Perfections.”²⁵ ¶ *And thy righteousness shall go before thee*. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Thy great righteousness shall go before thee.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And thy righteousness shall go before thee.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “And thy justice shall go before thy face.” Gill has: “Christ [is] their righteousness, the sun of righteousness, that arises upon them with healing in his wings, and from whom they have the health before mentioned.” Alexander proposes: “Knobel improves upon Gesenius’s . . . assumption that קִדְמָה means salvation, by explaining it in this case as an abstract used for the concrete, and accordingly translating it *thy Saviour* . . . The parallel term *glory* may then be understood as denoting the manifested glory of Jehovah, or Jehovah himself in glorious epiphany; just as his presence with his people in the wilderness was manifested by the pillar of cloud and of fire, which sometimes went before them, and at other times brought up their rear.” ¶ *The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward*. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “And thou shalt be gathered to the glory, which is in the presence of the Lord.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And the glory of the Lord will surround thee.” The BPE (Ⓔ) has, “The Glory of the Lord shall go next to thee.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “And the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up.” Rereward or rear guard. As Ibn Ezra points out, “Thus, there will be protection from all sides.” Birks explains: “The figure is borrowed from the history of the Exodus and the journey through the wilderness.” So we have: “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night” (Exodus 14:19-20). Barnes says: “Margin ||, ‘Shall

gather thee up.’ That is, shall bring up the rear.” As we pointed out earlier, the rear is where the very young, the old, and the infirm are found. ¶ Gill, continuing with the theme of the restoration of the Gospel, has: “The phrase denotes a glorious state of the church in the latter day, when the glory of the Lord will be risen on his church, and abide upon it, and upon all that glory there shall be a defence.”

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I [am]. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I [am]. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Then thou shalt pray, and the Lord shall hear thy prayer; thou shalt supplicate before Him, and He shall grant thy supplication.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Then thou shalt cry and God will answer thee; and whilst thou art speaking he will say, Lo I am here.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has *hear* instead of *answer*. ¶ The Talmud tradition (Seder Nashim, Yevamoth 62b-63a, see also Seder Nezikin, Sanhedrin 26a) suggests this wonderful blessing is subject to righteous behavior, such as: “Concerning a man who loves his wife as himself, who honours her more than himself, who guides his sons and daughters in the right path . . . Scripture says, And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace. Concerning him who loves his neighbours, who befriends his relatives . . . and lends a sela’ [i.e., coin] to a poor man in the hour of his need, Scripture says, Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer; thou shalt cry and He will say: ‘Here I am’” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ Jennings says of הִנְנִי, “For Jehovah here puts Himself as listening for the very first appeal or cry, and at once answering, ‘Here am I.’ Think of that, my fellow-believers, think of the ‘high and exalted One who inhabits eternity’ waiting on such poor creatures as we, and instantly responding to our cry with ‘Here am I.’” Or, more literally, “Here I,” or “Behold me” (Gesenius, Rotherham, YLT). Indeed, can there be anything better than to be able to commune with God in this manner and know that He will hear our prayers? ¶ President Harold B. Lee testified: “What a wonderful feeling of security can come in a crisis to one who has learned to pray and has cultivated listening ears so that he can ‘call, and the Lord shall answer’; when he can cry and the Lord shall say, ‘Here I am.’”²⁶ When the

²⁵ LDS.org, LDS Bible Dictionary.

²⁶ President Harold B. Lee, A Time of Decision, Ensign (CR), July 1972, p.29. Also see Elder Harold B. Lee, Conference Report, October 1968, Second Day-Morning Meeting, p.62.

Lord answers our prayers in this manner, we will feel as if we lived in His presence. President Harold B. Lee also taught: “If you analyze . . . the 58th chapter of the book of Isaiah you will find unraveled why the Lord wants us to pay fast offerings, why he wants us to fast. It’s because by qualifying thus we can call and the Lord can answer. We can cry and the Lord will say, ‘Here I am.’”²⁷ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland likewise testified: “I bear witness of the miracles, both spiritual and temporal, that come to those who live the law of the fast. I bear witness of the miracles that have come to me. Truly, as Isaiah recorded, I have cried out in the fast more than once, and truly God has responded, ‘Here I am.’ Cherish that sacred privilege at least monthly, and be as generous as circumstances permit in your fast offering and other humanitarian, educational, and missionary contributions. I promise that God will be generous to you, and those who find relief at your hand will call your name blessed forever.”²⁸ President Spencer W. Kimball promised that missionaries who were full of zeal and ready to share their testimonies of the Gospel would also be blessed with the promises made in ISAIAH 58:8-9.²⁹ Elder James B. Martino shows a direct relationship between fasting, prayer and revelation: “Prayer and fasting will allow us to be susceptible to spiritual promptings. Communicating with Heavenly Father while purposefully abstaining from food and drink allows us to ‘loose the bands of wickedness [and] to undo the heavy burdens.’ Prayer, combined with fasting, will provide so that when we ‘call, . . . the Lord shall answer; . . . [and when we] cry, . . . he shall say, Here I am.’”³⁰ President John Taylor powerfully testified, “It is for us to live holy, justly, purely and righteously before God, that we may have a legitimate claim upon Him. If we will do this, then I tell you, in the name of Israel’s God, that you shall call upon the Lord and He will hear and answer you; that you shall draw nigh unto Him and He will draw nigh unto you . . .”³¹ ¶ *If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke.* The Targum (Ⲯ) has, “If thou put away

from the midst of thee perverted judgment.” The LXX (Ⲅ) reads, “If thou remove from thee the bond.” Instead of *yoke*, the Peshitta (Ⲥ) has *deceit*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⲳ) has, “If thou wilt take away the chain out of the midst of thee.” Ibn Ezra suggests: “*From thy midst*] From thy heart, or from the midst of Israel.” This probably is related to any sort of abuse of power extended towards our families, employees, and so on. Jenour speaks this and the next cause of oppression. Gill suggests that the yoke of false religion is meant. See also above, in ISAIAH 58:6. ¶ *The putting forth of the finger.* The Targum (Ⲯ) has, “The pointing of the finger.” The LXX (Ⲅ) reads, “And the vote .” The Peshitta (Ⲥ) has *and release the prisoners* (BPE) / *release the oppressed* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (Ⲳ) has, “And cease to stretch out the finger.” Birks has: “*The putting forth of the finger*] A gesture of contempt . . . A mocking, cynical spirit is one of the special dangers of the last times.” Ibn Ezra suggests: “*The putting forth of thy finger*] that is, the stretching out of the hand to smite the neighbour or to take away his property.” More likely, as Rawlinson points out: “The pointing of the finger at anyone in scorn.” ¶ *And speaking vanity.* The Targum (Ⲯ) has, “And the speaking of violent words.” The LXX (Ⲅ) reads, “And decree which occasion murmuring.” Instead of *vanity*, the Peshitta (Ⲥ) has *falsehood*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⲳ) has, “And to speak that which profiteth not.” Any talk or speech that is not uplifting can fall into the category of speaking vanity. Gesenius defines ⲓⲛⲥ as *emptiness* or *vanity*. This is a word also associated with the vanity of idols (see Gesenius, HAL).

10 And [if] thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness [be] as the noonday:

And [if] thou draw out thy soul to the hungry. The Targum (Ⲯ) has, “And if thou breathest (the sense is, ‘if thou givest to the hungry what would sustain thy own life’) out thy soul before the hungry.” The LXX (Ⲅ) reads, “And from thy soul give bread to the hungry.” Instead of *draw out thy soul*, the Peshitta (Ⲥ) has *give your bread* (Lamsa) / *share your bread* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⲳ) has, “When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry.” Horsley suggests: “*And if thou draw out thy soul*] Rather, “And if thou impart of thine own substance, or sustenance.” Lowth, pointing to some of the other ancient manuscripts has: “But instead of ⲓⲛⲥ, thy soul, eight MSS (three ancient) read ⲓⲛⲥⲓⲛⲥ, thy bread; and so the Syriac renders it. The LXX express both words, τὸν ἄρτον ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς σου, *thy bread from thy soul*.” Rawlinson suggests: “If thou

²⁷ President Harold B. Lee in, “The Law of the Fast: A Personal Responsibility to Care for the Poor and Needy,” by Bishop Dean M. Davies, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. October 2014 General Conference. Also see Lee, Harold B. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*. Edited by Clyde J. Williams. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, pp. 125-130.

²⁸ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Are We Not All Beggars?” October 2014 General Conference.

²⁹ Kimball, Spencer W. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*. Edited by Edward L. Kimball. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1982, pp. 569-570, 574-579.

³⁰ Elder James B. Martino, “Turn to Him and Answers Will Come,” October 2015 General Conference.

³¹ JD 24:235a. God is on the Side of Israel. Discourses by President John Taylor on a Recent Trip to Bear Lake, delivered in the Various Settlements Around Bear Lake.

draw out thy soul to the hungry; *i.e.* not merely giving him bread, but giving him sympathy and compassion with it.” Rawlinson’s comments make us think of Peter and John, as they made eye contact with the disabled beggar, as it is so easy not to make eye contact with those in need: “And Peter, *fastening his eyes upon him* with John, said, Look on us” (Acts 3:4, but see 3:1 ff., emphasis added). *Draw out thy soul* seems to mean, then, to be moved with compassion. ¶ *And satisfy the afflicted soul.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And satisfiest the afflicted soul.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “And satisfy an afflicted soul.” In James we read: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:15-17). There are many afflictions that we may be called to help assuage: physical, emotional and spiritual. If we are not doing any of these things, indeed our faith is dead. But what a glorious promise is made to those who are concerned with satisfying the afflicted souls, as follows. ¶ *Then shall thy light rise in obscurity.* The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Then shall thy light spring up in darkness.” Instead of *rise*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *shine*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has *darkness* instead of *obscurity*. Shalom Paul has in part, “Then the darkness shall be pierced by luminescence.” This is one of the great gifts that a disciple of Christ may obtain: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). ¶ *And thy darkness [be] as the noonday:* The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “And thy darkness shall be as the noon day.” This means that even the darkest moment for the disciple, will be as noonday. The disciple of Christ is to chase darkness away with light and truth, “And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you” (D&C 50:25). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained: “Through His grace God has dealt bread to the hungry and clothing to the poor. At various times in our lives that will include all of us, either temporally or spiritually speaking. For every one of us the gospel has broken forth as the light of the morning, driving back the darkness of ignorance and sorrow, fear and despair.”³²

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, [✓] and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and

³² Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Watered Garden.” October 2001 General Conference.

like a spring of water, whose waters fail [✓] not.

- ✓ droughts
- ✓ ✓ lie, or, deceive

And the LORD shall guide thee continually. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “And the Lord will give thee rest continually.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “And thy God will be with thee continually.” ¶ This continual guidance can only be if we can accept that indeed God does speak and reveal today. In the arguments against seating Senator Reed Smoot, and Apostle in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have the words of Robert W. Taylor, “Several hundred thousand sincere men and women have believed and now believe as they believe in their own existence, that Joseph Smith Jr. received revelation direct from God. And if anyone ever believed that, we must assume that Senator Smoot believes it. Now a senator for the United States might believe anything else in the world but that and not be ineligible to a seat in the body to which he belongs. He might believe in polygamy, he might believe that murder was commendable. He might deny the propriety as a rule of life of all the Ten Commandments. He might believe in the sacrifice of human life, he might believe in no God, or in a thousand gods. He might be Jew or Gentile, Mohammedan or Buddhist. Atheist or Pantheist. He might believe that the world began last year, and would end next year. But to believe with a kind of conviction that Reed Smoot possesses that God speaks to him or may speak to him is to admit by the inevitable logic of his conviction that there is a superior authority with whom here and now he may converse, and whose command he can no more refuse to obey, than he can will himself not to think.”³³ In other words, he argued that belief in revelation set members of the Church apart from others, so strange was the concept of revelation not so long ago. The Prophet Joseph Smith shared the First Vision with a Methodist preacher: “I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them” (Joseph Smith—History 1:21b). The thing I most value, above all other things, is the knowledge that we have a *living God* who hears and answers our prayers and indeed, guides us continually. Indeed, we have a living God and a living Prophet who guides the Church. And

³³ Joseph Smith Papers, Episode 23, The Revelations of Joseph Smith. KJZZ-TV, with Glenn Rawson, in conjunction with the historical department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

that is not all; it is as if each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a Urim and Thummim in the way of the Holy Ghost. So it is that Amulek, in the Book of Mormon, ties the importance of this *continual seeking for guidance* from our Heavenly Father with *satisfying the afflicted soul*: “Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness. Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you. And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith” (Alma 34:19-28). ¶ Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught, “As we keep the Lord’s commandments, we see his light ever brighter on our path and we realize the fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise, ‘And the Lord shall guide thee continually.’”³⁴ ¶ *And satisfy thy soul in drought*. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And satisfy thy soul in the years of drought.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And thou shalt be satisfied as thy soul desireth.” Instead of *in drought*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *with rich foods* (Lamsa) / *delicacies* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “And will fill thy soul with brightness.” Faussett, leaning on Maurer, has: “Literally, ‘drought,’ that is, parched places.” Even when there is drought all around you, the Lord will bless you. Perhaps there is an allusion to Amos 8:11, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.” Perhaps the idea is that there would be no spiritual drought for the disciples of Jesus Christ; rather, these would be filled with the Spirit and partake of the joy of the Gospel. ¶ *And make fat thy bones*: The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And He shall quicken thy body with eternal life.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And thy bones shall be made fat.” Instead of *make fat*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *strengthen*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “And deliver thy bones.”

³⁴ Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “The Light and Life of the World.” October 1987 General Conference.

Cowles explains it: “*Make fat thy bones*] Is strictly to renew their vigor, to reanimate thy physical frame with new vitality.” The idea is precisely the same as that of marrow in the bones, such as we find in the *Word of Wisdom* and elsewhere: “And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones” (D&C 89:18, see also Job 21:24; Psalm 63:5; Proverbs 3:8; and ISAIAH 25:6). ¶ *And thou shalt be like a watered garden*. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And thy soul shall be full with delicacies like a watered garden, well irrigated.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And be like a watered garden.” Water is often associated with blessings. Faussett has: “An Oriental picture of happiness.” Rawlinson points us to Jeremiah 31:12. ¶ Margalioth considers the *thesis and antithesis* of this verse, using the words *to be like* or *to be as* כִּי־הוּא (although the form of the verb *to be* varies) / and *as* or *and like* כִּי / *that* or *which* or *whose* הַיּוֹם, thus we have in Isaiah 1:30, “For ye SHALL BE LIKE an oak whose leaf fadeth, AND LIKE a garden WHICH hath no water,” and contrasts this to this verse in the second half of Isaiah. Whereas in Isaiah 1:30 the comparison is towards misery, its companion scripture in Isaiah 58 turns it into a thing of good: “And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou SHALT BE LIKE a watered garden, AND LIKE a spring of water, WHICH waters fail not” (Isaiah 58:11). Like Hebrew words have here been rendered by the same English word. ¶ A watered garden seems to have an ever available supply of water. To me, this is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, which is further described in the next clause: ¶ *And like a spring of water, whose waters fail not*. The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And like a spring whose water never failed.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *fountain* instead of *spring*. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost is to the soul what water is to the land. Similarly, we read: “. . . then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever” (D&C 121:45b-46).

12 And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Thy offspring (literally, ‘they that shall be of thee’) shall build the old waste places.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And thine old waste places shall be rebuilt.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And the places that have been desolate for ages shall be built in thee.” Faussett suggests: “*old waste places*] —the old ruins of Jerusalem (ISAIAH 61:4; Ezekiel 36:33-36).” Rawlinson has: “Thy descendants shall restore all that has fallen into decay in Israel, whether it be cities or customs. They shall restore ‘breaches’ of every kind, and bring back the old paths for thee to walk in. The restoration of the ruined cities of Judah may be glanced at, but is far from exhausting the writer’s meaning (comp. ISAIAH 61:4).” Horsley has: “I am mistaken if in this verse it is not intimated that the Church of the Gentiles perfectly reformed shall be the instrument of the final conversion of the Jews.” Not the Church of the Gentiles, but the Restored Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which will be instrumental in repairing the breach between Israel and the Lord, specifically, repairing the breach of the Abrahamic covenant (see Hosea 1:9), through the Book of Mormon, “. . . and [I Jehovah] will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God . . . Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Ezekiel 37:23b, 26-27, but see 37:15 ff.). ¶ *Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations.* The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And thy foundations shall last for generations of generations.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Thou shalt raise up the foundations of generation and generation.” Fausset suggests: “*foundations of many generations*] —that is, the buildings which had lain in ruins, even to their *foundations, for many ages*; called in the parallel passage (Isaiah 61:4), ‘the former desolations’; and in the preceding clause here, ‘the old waste places.’ The literal and spiritual restoration of Israel is meant . . .” ¶ *And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And they shall call thee, The restorer of the right way; The converter of the wicked to the law.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And thou shalt be called the repairer of breaches, and shalt enjoy rest in the midst of thy paths.” Instead of *breach* (בְּרֵיחַ), the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has the plural, *breaches*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And thou shalt be called the repairer of the fences, turning the paths into rest.” Faussett has: “*breach*] —the calamity wherewith God visited Israel for their sin (ISAIAH 30:26; 1Chronicles 15:13). This is the breach that

caused Hosea to say, as inspired by the Lord: “Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hosea 1:9). And yet that breach would be repaired after a long night of apostasy and we would instead have: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God” (Hosea 1:10). *The paths to dwell in* represent the straight and narrow way of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Skinner points us to Job 24:13, where we read: “They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.” This verse is a perfect description of apostasy and the turning away from the light to walk in darkness. Elder Orson Pratt taught: “In the apostles’ days, when the art of printing was unknown, and the great majority of mankind could not read the word, the principal means of obtaining faith was by the process of preaching and hearing, but in these days, in many instances, faith comes, by reading as well as by preaching: for a man called and inspired of God can both preach and write by the power of the Holy Ghost; and when the honest humble soul either hears or reads that which is given by the Spirit, the light that is in him witnesseth that it is of God; for light cleaves to light, and truth to truth; the Spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and if he loves the light that is in himself, he will love all other light that is presented to his mind, and embrace it. Light cannot be presented to the mind of a candid, honest person, without being perceived to be light; but if he receive it not, he extinguishes in a degree the light that is in him, and darkness still greater ensues, and he is left to commit evils of a greater magnitude, until the light that was in him has entirely fled, and darkness reigns triumphantly: this darkness brings misery and wretchedness in this world and eternal torment in the world to come. This is the state of man who rejects light and truth, and will not exercise faith in that which the light that is in him teaches him is true”³⁵ So, *The restorer of paths to dwell in*, then, by contrast, are those who bring the light back into the lives of people, they share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All of these clauses build one on the other to repeat the same sentiment. One of the great blessings of sincere fasting and prayer will be the gift of speaking the Gospel truth so others can know of its veracity.

vv. 13-14. Isaiah teaches how we can fully embrace the Sabbath way. Elder H. Aldridge Gillespie taught: “Today is the Sabbath. It does not end when we leave

³⁵ Elder Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, pp. 210-211.

this session; it does not end if someone calls on the phone or knocks at our door inviting us to come out and play, go for a ride, to a ball game, or shopping; it does not end because we are on vacation or someone is visiting us, whether member or nonmember. The Lord commanded: ‘Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.’ A critical element in observing this commandment is to ‘remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.’ The Sabbath lasts all day! In a revelation ‘especially applicable to the saints in Zion,’ the Lord states that the Sabbath was given that we might keep ourselves ‘unspotted from the world.’ It is a day to partake of the sacrament, a day ‘to pay [our] devotions unto the Most High, a day of ‘fasting and prayer,’ a day to offer our time, talent, and means in service to our God and our fellowmen, D&C 59:12 reads, ‘Thou shalt offer up thine oblations,’ meaning to offer one’s time, talents, or means, a day to ‘[confess our] sins [to our] brethren, and before the Lord.’ It is also a good day to pay our tithes and fast offerings, a day to be marked by sincere sacrifice of the pursuits and pleasures of the world. It is a day to keep the Sabbath covenant, a day of ‘rejoicing and prayer,’ a day of ‘cheerful hearts and countenances.’ Isaiah promised, [quotes ISAIAH 58:13–14]. Obviously, our attention is on doing the Lord’s will and not continuing to work nor indulge our carnal appetites for recreation and loafing. The prophet Spencer W. Kimball counseled: ‘The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. Abstinence from work and recreation is important but insufficient. The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it. To observe it, one will be on his knees in prayer, preparing lessons, studying the gospel, meditating, visiting the ill and distressed, sleeping, reading wholesome material, and attending all the meetings of that day to which he is expected. [Failure] to do these proper things is a transgression on the omission side’ ([*The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 96–97].”³⁶

13 ¶ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words:

³⁶ Elder H. Aldridge Gillespie, “The Blessing of Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy.” October 2000 General Conference.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “employment” instead of *pleasure*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “If on account of the sabbaths thou restrain thy foot from doing thy pleasure on that holy day.” Brenton (Ⓞ) renders it: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, so as not to do thy pleasure on the holy days.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has *own will* instead of *pleasure*. Faussett well says: “The Sabbath, even under the new dispensation, was to be [kept] (ISAIAH 66:23).” ¶ Birks has: “*The holy day of the Lord*] God’s own title of the Sabbath.” Or, it seems to encompass both the Sabbath Day as well as the Day of the Lord, as it came to be known after the resurrection, when the day switched from the last day of the week to the first. Cowles well explains: “‘Turning away the foot from the Sabbath,’ is by no means turning the foot away from the house and the scenes of public worship, but turning it away from scenes of Sabbath desecration.” ¶ Elder Francisco J. Viñas said: “The key words are ‘turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure,’ or in other words, doing God’s will. Oftentimes, our will—shaped by the desires, appetites, and passions of the natural man—conflicts with the will of God. The prophet Brigham Young taught that ‘when the will, passions, and feelings of a person are perfectly submissive to God and his requirements, that person is sanctified.—It is, for my will to be swallowed up in the will of God, that will lead me into all good, and crown me ultimately with immortality and eternal lives’ (*Deseret News*, 7 September 1854, 1).”³⁷ If we are not doing our pleasure, we are doing the Lord’s pleasure. ¶ *And call the sabbath a delight.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And dost meet the Sabbath with great delight.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And call the sabbaths delightful.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, “And call the sabbath delightful.” Faussett writes: “This is the very way in which the Sabbath is mostly broken; it is made a day of carnal pleasure instead of spiritual ‘delight.’” Kay shows us an example of the opposite: “Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?” (Amos 8:4-5). ¶ Elder Russell M. Nelson gave a powerful Conference address on the Sabbath: “I am intrigued by the words of Isaiah, who called the Sabbath ‘a delight’ . . . In Hebrew, the word Sabbath means ‘rest.’ The purpose of the Sabbath dates back to the Creation of the world, when after six days of labor the Lord rested from the work of creation . . . the Sabbath was given as a perpetual covenant, a constant reminder that the Lord

³⁷ Elder Francisco J. Viñas, “The Pleasing Word of God.” October 2015 General Conference.

may sanctify His people . . . In addition, we now partake of the sacrament on the Sabbath day in remembrance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ . . . I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a sign between me and my Heavenly Father (Exodus 31:13³⁸; Ezekiel 20:12,³⁹ 20⁴⁰) . . . What sign will you give to the Lord to show your love for Him? When Isaiah described the Sabbath as ‘a delight,’ he also taught us how to make it delightful. He said: ‘If thou turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, . . . and shalt honour [the Lord], not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.’ Not pursuing your ‘own pleasure’ on the Sabbath requires self-discipline . . . Think of this: In paying tithing, we return one-tenth of our increase to the Lord. In keeping the Sabbath holy, we reserve one day in seven as His. So it is our privilege to consecrate both money and time to Him who lends us life each day. Faith in God engenders a love for the Sabbath; faith in the Sabbath engenders a love for God. A sacred Sabbath truly is a delight.”⁴¹ Note that in all three of the Scriptures mentioned by President Nelson, the Lord makes a promise to those who keep the Sabbath day, that: “Ye may know that I am the LORD.” And furthermore, that it is He who sanctifies us. ¶ *The holy of the LORD, honourable.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “To sanctify the Lord.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Dedicated to God (Brenton, ‘holy to God’).” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And the holy of the Lord glorious.” ¶ *And shalt honour him.* The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And glorify him.” ¶ Elder Russell M. Nelson made these profound comments (emphasis added): “No matter where we live or in what position we serve, all of us need to determine which way we face. *God’s commandments serve as a standard against which priorities can be measured.* Our respect for the first commandment fashions our feelings for all the others. Consider the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, for example. We live in a time when many people throughout the world have transferred their allegiance on the Sabbath from places

³⁸ “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you” (Exodus 31:13).

³⁹ “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12).

⁴⁰ “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12).

“And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God” (Ezekiel 20:20).

⁴¹ Elder Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight.” April 2015 General Conference.

of worship to places of amusement. Again I ask, ‘Which way do you face?’ Self-esteem is also earned by obedience to God’s commandments regarding chastity. Yet in our day those commands have been attacked and trivialized. The morality of self-discipline with appropriate ‘denial or restraint has been popularly depicted as unhealthy and dehumanizing.’ The truth is, ‘it is dehumanizing to define ourselves by our desires alone.’ [Report of the Ramsey Colloquium, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 February 1994, A-18.] Each human being is a child of God—created in His image—with natural appetites to control . . . Thus, our priorities should be honestly evaluated in terms of that first commandment [not to ‘allow any other person or cause to come before allegiance to Him’]. If change in direction is needed, we may want to issue a self-command to ‘about face!’ Doing so would please the Lord, who said, ‘Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations’ (Ezekiel 14:6).”⁴² ¶ *Not doing thine own ways.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And wilt not lift up thy foot for any work.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “While thou dost not thy own ways.” If we are not doing our own ways, we are doing the ways of the Lord; if we are not finding our own pleasure, we are finding the pleasure of the Lord; if we are not speaking our own words, it is the words of the Lord that we are speaking. We are then in the Lord’s errand, walking in His ways, doing what pleases Him and speaking only those words with which we are moved by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *Nor finding thine own pleasure.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Nor making thy wants ample.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And thy own will is not found.” Some suggest *business*, to which Alexander says: “to find one’s *pleasure* on the Sabbath is more natural than to find one’s *business*.” ¶ *Nor speaking [thine own] words:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Nor speaking violent words.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Nor utter a word in anger from thy mouth.” Instead of the ellipsis, *thine own*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *idle words* (Lamsa) / *speaking just to speak* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “To speak a word.” If we do not speak our own words—and we reject speaking the words of Satan—whose words do we then speak? The words of Christ, which in turn are the words of the Father! I bear solemn testimony that we can speak the words of Christ as we are filled by His spirit. Elder Gene R. Cook, formerly of the First Quorum of the Seventy, explained: “Since the scriptures come from the mind of Christ, they help us to have the Spirit, which brings us to a oneness of mind and heart with the Lord. Therefore, as you read and study and assimilate the words of the Lord through the scriptures, you are in the process of absorbing the mind of Christ. You begin to think as he

⁴² Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods.” April 1996.

thinks. You begin to feel as he feels. *You begin to speak as he speaks.* How can we know how well we are doing in our scripture reading? We can know we are doing well when we hear his voice (both in the scriptures directly and through revelation), when our hearts burn within us at hearing his word, when we receive the words of Christ into our bosoms, and when we receive them into our minds (and thus we learn how to feel as he feels and think as he thinks.)⁴³

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].

¶ *Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And trust continually in the Lord.” Instead of *delight*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *trust*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Then shalt thou be delighted in the Lord.” ¶ Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught: “[The Sabbath] is a day to ‘delight thyself in the Lord,’ to experience the spiritual healing that comes with the sacrament, and to receive the renewed promise of His Spirit to be with us.”⁴⁴ To delight oneself in the Lord is to receive a testimony so strong that He lives, and to feel of His presence in our lives. It is to commune with Him; to be able to count on the Lord and know that He is there when we need to talk with Him. ¶ *And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And He shall cause thee to dwell in the strong places of the earth.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “He will then mount thee on the good places of the land.” Cowles suggests: “‘Riding upon the high places of the earth,’ is first used by Moses (Deuteronomy 32:13).” There, the Lord is reminding Israel of her blessings, and we see allusions to both expressions, “high places” as well as “heritage of Jacob” found here in Isaiah: “*For the LORD’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. *He made him ride on the high places of the earth,* that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of

kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape” (Deuteronomy 32:9-14, emphasis added, also an allusion to *Rain in Due Season*). Sadly, Israel did not retain these blessings, but rather, full of pathos we read: “But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked &c.” (Deuteronomy 32:15a ff.). When compared with various like scriptures, it seems that the expression “upon the high places,” here means one of safety and military advantage as Alexander and several others suggest. Nevertheless, man’s high places are never high enough when pride takes over (cf. Deuteronomy 33:29; Amos 4:13; Micah 1:3). ¶ Ibn Ezra suggests: “*The high places of the earth*] The holy land.” Faussett speaks of the restoration to the land if Israel: “*ride upon ... high places*] —I will make thee *supreme lord* of the land; the phrase is taken from a conqueror riding in his chariot, and occupying the hills and fastnesses of a country [Vitringa], (Deuteronomy 32:13; Micah 1:3; Habakkuk 3:19). Judea was a land of hills; the idea thus is, ‘I will restore thee to thine own land’ [Calvin]. The parallel words, ‘heritage of Jacob,’ confirm this (Genesis 27:28, 29; 28:13-15).” ¶ In their spiritual sense, these words are full of meaning, to include closeness to God, earthly blessings untold, and eternal life. ¶ *And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And feed thee on the inheritance of thy father Jacob.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father.” Rawlinson has in part, “The world itself was the ‘heritage of Jacob,’ since in him and his seed ‘all the families of the earth were to be blessed’ (Genesis 28:14).” Once again, this is nothing less remarkable than the Abrahamic Covenant. We read: “Among the promises made to Abraham were the following: his posterity would be numerous (see Genesis 17:5-6; Abraham 2:9; 3:14); his seed, or descendants, would receive the gospel and bear the priesthood (see Abraham 2:9); through the ministry of his seed, ‘all the families of the earth [would] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal’ (Abraham 2:11).”⁴⁵ ¶ *For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For thus it is decreed by the Word of the Lord.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken these words.” ¶ Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught, “A Sabbath law that codifies certain acts as forbidden is pharisaical. Here, as much as in any area of gospel observance, ‘the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life’ (2 Corinthians 3:6). In terms of the appropriateness of various Sabbath activities, our actions are sometimes less important than our motives.

⁴³ Gene R. Cook, *Searching the Scriptures: Bringing Power to Your Personal and Family Study*, pp.122-123 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.” October 2015 General Conference.

⁴⁵ Abrahamic Covenant, LDS.org, URL accessed 11 September 2016, <https://www.lds.org/topics/abrahamic-covenant?lang=eng>

An action that is wrong with one motive may be right with another. It is the motive that determines whether a Sabbath excursion is a joyride or an errand of compassion. We look to the purpose of the Sabbath to identify the motives by which our Sabbath activities should be regulated. The Sabbath was blessed and sanctified as a holy day, a day of rest (Genesis 2:3; Moses 3:3; Exodus 20:9-11). But this sanctification and commandment of rest was for a purpose—not that man should refrain from work in order to pursue his own pleasure, but that man should serve God and worship him. The prophet Isaiah taught that principle clearly: ‘If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing

thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it’ (ISAIAH 58:13-14).⁴⁶

FIRST POSTED: 26 September 2016

⁴⁶ Oaks, Dallin H. *Pure in Heart*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1988, pp. 26-29.

