

Both childish misunderstandings and adolescent disillusionment are swept away when the “veil [is] taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding [are] opened,”<sup>324</sup> providing a direct vision of those things to which the inevitably limited words of scripture<sup>325</sup> are intended to point the mind and heart. Thus, the personal value of scripture is not merely in that it gives a more or less accurate account of God’s relationship with various peoples throughout history, but more fundamentally in the fact that it provides a means for individuals to recognize how God acts continually in their own lives.<sup>326</sup> Said Joseph Smith: “He that can mark the power of Omnipotence, inscribed upon the heavens, can also see God’s own handwriting in the sacred volume: and he who reads it oftenest will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand wherever he can see it.”<sup>327</sup>

The relationship between scriptural history and personal experience operates in both forward and backward directions: not only do the stories of scripture guide daily life, but our daily life conditions our understanding of scriptural accounts. Indeed, it is through direct participation in repeated experiences of God’s power and help in the present that the histories reported by scripture become both intelligible and credible to modern believers. As Timothy Luke Johnson expresses regarding the immediate nature of the sources for one’s personal conviction of the historical authenticity of New Testament scripture:

For those living in a community where “signs and wonders” done in the name of Jesus are a regular occurrence, hearing of such deeds attributed to Jesus in the Gospel narratives is no surprise or scandal...

For those living in a community where the “Word of the Lord” [is] proclaimed through [men and women of God],... it is no surprise or scandal to hear... words [spoken in the same spirit] attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, for it is the same Jesus who speaks in both places...

For a community that lives in the presence of the resurrected [Christ], it is beside the point to debate whether Jesus “back then” predicted His death and resurrection, for His death and above all His resurrection are confirmed as real precisely by this community that lives by His power [today]. It is equally silly, in this context, to debate whether Jesus “back then” predicted His return, for that return is predicated on His being the living and powerful Lord, and it is in the light of that truth that we await God’s final triumph through Him.<sup>328</sup>

324 D&C 110:1-2. See also Ether 3:6; D&C 76:12, 19; 138:11.

325 See, e.g., Moroni’s lament about the difficulty in reducing revelation to writing (Ether 12:23-27).

326 J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*, p. 38.

327 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1834, p. 56.

328 L. T. Johnson, *Real Jesus*, p. 145; c.f., J. H. Charlesworth, *DSS and NT*, pp. 142-143. See also *Excursus 1: Speech, Writing, and Revelation*, p. 512 and *Excursus 6: The Authority and Power of Scripture*, p. 531.