

so that they should walk not in darkness, but in the light and power of God, and be raised above the things of the world, and be superior to the things around them; so that they might walk independently beneath the celestial world, and in the sight of God and heaven, as free men, pursuing that course that should be marked out to them by the Holy Ghost; that course by which they could elevate themselves to knowledge and power, and thus prepare themselves to receive the glory that God proposed to confer upon them, and to occupy the exalted position to which God designed to raise them.

In view of this, Jesus told the young man who came to him and wished to know what he should do to inherit eternal life, to “keep the commandments.” The young man replied that he had kept these commandments referred to from his youth upward. The Savior, looking upon him, saw there was still something lacking. The young man had kept the moral law, the law given to Moses, and for this Jesus loved him, but saw that there was one thing lacking. He was a rich man, and held influence in the world in consequence of his superior wealth. Jesus knew that before he could elevate him, or any other man, to the celestial world, it was necessary that he should be submissive in all things, and view obedience to the celestial law of the utmost importance. Jesus knew what was required of every man to gain a celestial crown—that nothing should be held dearer than obedience to the requirements of heaven. The Savior saw in this young man a cleaving to something that was not in accordance with the law of the celestial kingdom. He saw peradventure, a disposition in him to adhere in his feelings to that

which was injurious to him, and would render a compliance to all the demands of the Gospel disagreeable or impossible, therefore he told him that he should go and sell all that he had, “and give to the poor, and follow him.” This commandment made the young man feel sad and sorrowful. He looked upon riches as the great object in life, as bringing him the influence of the world, and all things that were desirable; as procuring him the blessings and enjoyments of life, and as the means of lifting him to high positions in society. He could not conceive the idea of a person’s securing the blessings, enjoyments and privileges of life, and such things as his nature craved, independent of his wealth. But the Gospel was of a nature that provided for everything that was necessary to fulfil the wants and requirements of man and to make him happy. Riches were not so calculated; and the Lord desired him to give up these ideas, and to dislodge them from his mind and feelings, so he might secure him as his servant in all things. He desired this man to be wholly devoted to his service, and to go into his work with full purpose of heart, and follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and prepare himself for celestial glory. But this young man was not willing; it was too great a sacrifice. And the Savior said upon this occasion, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” The disciples “were astonished out of measure” at this, “saying among themselves, who then can be saved?” They thought that no man could possess riches and be saved in the kingdom of God. This was the idea they received from the