

LESSON 48
“Come Unto Christ”
Moroni 7-8; 10

OVERVIEW:

Mormon explains how to judge between good and evil. Mormon explains the importance of faith, hope and charity. Mormon teaches that little children are saved through Christ’s Atonement. The Holy Ghost testifies of all truth. Spiritual gifts follow those who come unto Christ.

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF MORONI
CHAPTER 7

An invitation to enter into the rest of the Lord—Pray with real intent—The Spirit of Christ enables men to know good from evil—Satan persuades men to deny Christ and do evil—The prophets manifest the coming of Christ—By faith miracles are wrought and angels minister—Men should hope for eternal life and cleave unto charity. [Between A.D. 400 and 421] (Why is this chapter here? Faith, hope and charity were already mentioned in Ether 12. Moroni may not have been well educated. He says in Ether 12 that he is not a good writer, and so he includes the entire talk of his father because this topic is so very important that the words he wrote in Ether are not as good as those written by his father here.)

1 AND now I, Moroni, write a few of the words of my father Mormon, which he spake concerning ^afaith, hope, and charity; for after this manner did he speak unto the people, as he taught them in the ^bsynagogue which they had built for the place of worship. (Transcript of a talk)

2 And now I, Mormon, speak unto you, my beloved brethren; and it is by the ^agrace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and his holy will, because of the gift of his ^bcalling (Most likely an Apostle) unto me, that I am permitted to speak unto you at this time.

3 Wherefore, I would speak unto you that are of the ^achurch, (This talk was given to church members. It pertains to us today.) that are the ^bpeaceable followers of Christ, (Inner peace comes from Christ even though the world around us may be in turmoil and at war.) and that have obtained a sufficient ^chope by which ye can enter into the ^drest (fullness of God’s glory) of the Lord, from this time henceforth until (in the celestial kingdom) ye shall rest with him in heaven. (President Joseph F. Smith taught that once the Saints of God have gained a testimony which is unshakeable and which will allow them to confront the antagonists of the faith with confidence, they have in this life entered into the rest of the Lord. Theirs is a settled conviction of the truth which comes through their hope in Christ and the faith that he will in time bestow upon them the riches of eternity. (See Gospel Doctrine, pp. 58, 126.) DCBM, 4:333)

4 And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable ^awalk with the children of men. (Remember that this is occurring during the terrible wars between the Nephites and Lamanites)

5 For I remember the word of God which saith by their ^aworks ye shall know them; for if their works be good, then they are good also.

6 For behold, God hath said a man being ^aevil cannot do that which is good; for if he ^boffereth a gift, or ^cprayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real ^dintent it profiteth him nothing. (Dallin H. Oaks: Have you ever found yourself doing something you thought was right, but doing it because you "had" to? Did you ever keep a commandment of God with an attitude of resentment or self-righteousness, or even because you expected some immediate personal benefit? I suppose most of us have had this experience. Do you remember your feelings on such occasions? Do you think such feelings will be ignored by a Father in Heaven who gave us the willpower we call agency? Don't such feelings tell us something about the desires of our hearts? under the law of God we are accountable for our feelings and desires as well as our acts. Evil thoughts and desires will be punished. Acts that seem to be good bring blessings only when they are done with real and righteous intent. On the positive side, we will be blessed for the righteous desires of our hearts even though some outside circumstance has made it impossible for us to carry those

desires into action. 1985-86 Devotional and Fireside Speeches, 29, 31)

7 For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness.

8 For behold, if a man being ^aevil giveth a gift, he doeth it ^bgrudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.

9 And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with ^areal intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.

10 Wherefore, a man being evil cannot do that which is good; neither will he give a good gift.

11 For behold, a bitter ^afountain cannot bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore, a man being a servant of the devil cannot follow Christ; and if he ^bfollow Christ he cannot be a ^cservant of the devil.

12 Wherefore, all things which are ^agood cometh of God; and that which is ^bevil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to ^csin, and to do that which is evil continually. (Then he explains what's going on in verses 12-13. Notice the balance here. They're perfectly balanced against each other here, using the same expressions exactly.

You're thinking of a person suspended in space, and two planets are trying to pull him in opposite directions to opposite orbits. "For the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually." There is no mention anywhere of God fighting against the devil. He doesn't have to. He could dismiss him like that. There's no issue there because the devil is phony. He can only react, but he's always fighting against God. You're not called upon to fight God's battles for him, as Mormon tells us here. He has not asked you to do that at all. He has asked you to do what's good. If you do righteously, that's the deadly weapon-not going out and attacking him [Satan] because he's evil. Remember, he's going to have to live with us forever, too, in eternity. We've got to get on with each other eventually. He's going to be forgiven, so there's nothing you can do by going out and trying to eliminate him. He says here, "The devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin [that's his method], and to do that which is evil continually." So it's like a gravitational force, a continual force exerting steady pressure or attraction to pull you over into an orbit where you'll be invited to sin and do evil continually. And with God the same thing: "That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually." On the other hand, you're continually being pulled in the opposite direction. But the same way, inviting and enticing-the same test. "Wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God." Between the two it's up to you, and the pull is equal. It has to be. Neither one is overwhelmingly powerful-not in this world. If God exerted irresistible force-which Joseph Smith says he will not do-then you would have no choice. I mean it wouldn't be a test at all. As Peter says in the famous Clementine Recognitions, if God forced us to be good, there'd be no merit in that at all. On the other hand, if the devil was absolutely overpowering and you couldn't resist him, we wouldn't be responsible for yielding to him. He'd be much too strong for us. So each of them has a mighty pull. The one is this direction, and the other is phony, but it's a mirror image of the other. There's a great early Christian literature in which the devil is an exact counterpart. He waits for God to act, and then he acts. He makes the same claims to dominion. He is the fisherman of men, too. He does all these other things. He sends out his missionaries. He has the same influence, and so it's up to you to make the choice. You're suspended in space between the two [and you decide] which direction you're going to move in here. Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 4:278-79))

13 But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do ^agood continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and ^benticeth to do ^cgood, and to love God, and to serve him, (Once God is able to entice us to go good, then we are to be of service to him) is ^dinspired of God. (These verses could easily be misunderstood. It is not that evil persons- or persons with less than noble motives- cannot do good things. They certainly can. It is just that their deeds prove in the end to be a blessing neither to themselves nor to those they serve. That is, so long as good deeds are motivated by selfish or malicious desires they cannot transform and enrich either the giver or the receiver. Unfortunately, such doctrine has caused some members of the Church to conclude, "Well, given the way I feel about going to church

right now [or doing my home teaching, or serving at the cannery], it would be better to just stay home!" No, it would not be better to stay home. Giving a gift is one thing. Performing my duties in the Church is another. It is almost always better to do the right thing for the wrong reason than to do the wrong thing—better to go to church or visit my families or show up for the welfare activity with a bad attitude than to remain at home. In most cases the very act of doing my duty (even with a less than celestial motive) results in good feelings and subsequent gratitude for having done the right thing. DCBM, 4:334)

14 Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is ^aevil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.

15 For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to ^ajudge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. (Joseph Smith: A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas.... Thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus. TPJS, 151.)

16 For behold, the ^aSpirit of Christ is given to every ^bman, that he may ^cknow good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Christ is 'the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' (D. & C. 93:2; John 1:9.) This enlightenment is administered to all men through the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Lord, or the Light of truth, or the light of Christ -- all of which expressions are synonymous. This Spirit fills the immensity of space, is in all things, and is not to be confused with the Personage of Spirit known as the Holy Ghost (or Spirit of the Lord). (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 38-54.) "The light of Christ is the Spirit of the Lord which leads men to accept the gospel and join the Church so that they may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Men are commanded to 'live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.' (D. & C. 84:44-46.) Those who hearken to this Spirit come into the Church, receiving 'of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins.' (D. & C. 20:37; 84:47-48; 47 And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit ^acometh unto God, even the Father. 48 And the Father ^ateacheth him of the covenant which he has ^brenewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the ^cwhole world. Alma 19:6; Now, seeing that I know these things, why should I desire more than to ^aperform the work to which I have been called? 26:3; Behold, I answer for you; for our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, yea, even in the darkest abyss, but behold, how ^amany of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made ^binstruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work. 28:14 And thus we see the great call of ^adiligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing—sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the ^blight of Christ unto life. Men are born again by following the light of Christ to the point where they receive the actual enjoyment of the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Mosiah 27:24-31; Alma 36.) It is because of the light of Christ that all men know good from evil and enjoy the guidance of what is called conscience." (Mormon Doctrine, pp. 446-7))

17 But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do ^aevil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

18 And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the ^alight by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same ^bjudgment which ye judge ye shall also

be judged. (We do not find this doctrine so clearly defined in the New Testament as in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon. But we discover this: The Lord has not left men (when they are born into this world) helpless, groping to find the light and truth, but every man that is born into the world is born with the right to receive the guidance, the instruction, the counsel of the Spirit of Christ, or Light of Truth, sometimes called the Spirit of the Lord in our writings. If a man who has never heard the gospel will hearken to the teachings and manifestations of the Spirit of Christ, or the Light of Truth, which come to him, often spoken of as conscience—every man has a conscience and knows more or less when he does wrong, and the Spirit guides him if he will hearken to its whisperings—it will lead him eventually to the fulness of the gospel. That is, he is guided by the Light, and when the gospel comes he will be ready to receive it. This is what the Lord tells us in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This Spirit of Truth, or Light of Christ, also has other functions. We read this in the revelation: "This . . . glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ, his Son—He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth, from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space. Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation 1:51)

19 Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the ^alight of Christ (This is an unusual phrase. It seems to mean something like, "Be diligent in following the Light of Christ," or "Search your hearts diligently and pay heed to the light with," or "Search diligently to know the truth and then hearken to the quiet voice within you." DCBM, 4:336. "Mormon's words indicate the need for effort on our part to obtain the real benefit of the Light of Christ. While this gift is given to everyone, we must be willing to let that light guide and direct our decisions or the light will grow dim. Speaking of this dwindling of the Light of Christ, President J. Reuben Clark explained, 'It is my hope and my belief that the Lord never permits the light of faith wholly to be extinguished in any human heart, however faint the light may glow. The Lord has provided that there shall still be a spark which, with teaching, with the spirit of righteousness, with love, with tenderness, with example, with living the Gospel, shall brighten and glow again, however darkened the mind may have been.' (Conference Report, October 1936, p. 114.)" (Clyde J. Williams, Church News, 11/30/96)) that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a ^bchild of Christ.

20 And now, my brethren, how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?

21 And now I come to that faith, of which I said I would speak; and I will tell you the way whereby ye may lay hold on every good thing.

22 For behold, God ^aknowing all things, being from ^beverlasting to everlasting, (Our God, the Almighty Elohim who is our Father in Heaven, is a man, a glorified man, an exalted Man, of Holiness. Joseph Smith explained in his famous King Follett sermon that that being whom we now worship was once a mortal man who dwelt on an earth, even as we do now (see Teachings, pp. 345-46). How, then, can he be "from everlasting to everlasting" or "from eternity to eternity"? Simply stated, this means "from the spirit existence through the probation which we are in, and then back again to the eternal existence which will follow." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation 1:12; see also Bruce R. McConkie, Promised Messiah, p. 166.) DCBM, 4:337) behold, he sent ^cangels to minister unto the children of men, to make manifest concerning the coming of Christ; and in Christ there should come every good thing. (God always sends angels to his prophets when he wants to restore priesthood authority.)

23 And God also declared unto prophets, by his own mouth, that Christ should come.

24 And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men, which were

good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were ^afallen, and there could no good thing come unto them. (Because we are fallen, we, by ourselves could not do good. It is by the help of Christ that we do good.)

25 Wherefore, by the ministering of ^aangels, (Isn't it interesting that Moroni is writing about angels when he is to be an angel himself in assisting with the restoration of the gospel in the last days?) and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

26 And after that he came men also were ^asaved by faith in his name; (The pattern for salvation, the process of faith, was not different for those who lived in the meridian of time than for those who lived in the days of Adam some four thousand years before. Nor is it any different for those who live two thousand years after his coming in the flesh—men and women must exercise faith in his name, repent of their sins, be reborn and renewed through his blood and by the power of the Holy Ghost, and endure faithfully to the end (see D&C 20:25-27: 25 That as many as would ^abelieve and be baptized in his holy name, and ^bendure in faith to the end, should be saved— 26 Not only those who believed after he came in the ^ameridian of time, in the ^bflesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who ^cspake as they were inspired by the ^dgift of the Holy Ghost, who truly ^etestified of him in all things, should have eternal life, 27 As well as those who should come after, who should believe in the ^agifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which ^bbearth record of the Father and of the Son;). In so doing they prepare themselves to enjoy "every good thing." DCBM, 4:338) and by faith, they become the ^bsons of God. And as surely as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, (Christ was taught to all the prophets starting with Adam) saying: ^cWhatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, ("And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20 DCBM, 4:338) in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you. Paul taught that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Joseph Smith elaborated on this principle when he taught "Faith comes by hearing the word of God through the testimony of the servants of God; that testimony is always attended by the Spirit of prophecy and revelation" (Teachings, p. 148). That testimony may be borne by mortals or by angels. In the earliest ages of the world, "the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 5:58: And thus the ^aGospel began to be ^bpreached, from the beginning, being declared by ^choly ^dangels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost.; compare D&C 20:35: And we know that these things are true and according to the revelations of John, neither ^aadding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his book, the holy scriptures, or the revelations of God which shall come hereafter by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, the ^bvoice of God, or the ministering of angels.). DCBM, 4:337)

27 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have ^amiracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath sat down on the right hand of God, to ^bclaim of the Father his rights of mercy which he hath upon the children of men?

28 For he hath answered the ends of the law, (See 2 Nephi 2:7 Behold, he offereth himself a ^asacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto ^bnone else can the ^cends of the law be answered. A person answers to the justice of God in one of two ways: (1) perfect obedience to the law, which leads to blessings and joy; (2) disobedience to the law, which leads to suffering and punishment and requires a payment or penalty. Christ answered on both counts. He kept the law perfectly. In addition, he pays the penalty for our sins, which payment becomes efficacious as we repent and trust in him.) and he claimeth all those who have faith in him; and they who have faith in him will ^acleave unto every good thing; wherefore he ^badvocateth the cause of the children of men; and he dwelleth eternally in the heavens. (Mormon is essentially asking, "Since the Atonement has been wrought, the greatest miracle in time or eternity, have miracles ceased, or has Jesus

Ceased to minister to us?" DCBM, 4:339)

29 And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither have ^aangels ceased to minister unto the children of men. (John Taylor: The angels are our watchmen... Angels ward off evil. One might as well undertake to throw the water out of this world into the moon with a teaspoon, as to do away with the supervision of angels upon the human mind. . . . They are the police of heaven and report whatever transpires on earth, and carry the petitions and supplications of men, women, and children to the mansions of remembrance, where they are kept as tokens of obedience by the sanctified, in "golden vials" labeled "*the prayers of the saints.*"— *The Gospel Kingdom*, 31. [Regarding Zion's Camp,] Notwithstanding our enemies were continually breathing threats of violence, we did not fear, neither did we hesitate... God was with us, and his angels went before us, and the faith of our little band was unwavering. We know that angels were our companions, for we saw them. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:73.)

30 For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of ^agodliness. (Angels are the servants of Christ. They are heavenly messengers sent by the Lord to minister to men and women on earth. Their ministry is not capricious, their service not haphazard. They labor under the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. Their ministry- whether seen or unseen- is to those of strong faith. DCBM, 4:340. Joseph F. Smith: When messengers are sent to minister to the inhabitants of this earth, they are not strangers, but from the ranks of our kindred friends, and fellow-beings and fellow-servants. Our fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters and friends who have passed away from this earth, having been faithful, and worthy to enjoy these rights and privileges, may have a mission given them to visit their friends and relatives upon the earth again, bringing from the divine presence messages of love, of warning, of reproof or instruction, to those whom they had learned to love in the flesh. *Gospel Doctrine*, 435-436.)

31 And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the ^achosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.

32 And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the ^aresidue of men may have ^bfaith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men.

33 And Christ hath said: ^aIf ye will have ^bfaith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is ^cexpedient in me.

34 And he hath said: ^aRepent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved.

35 And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with ^apower and great glory at the last ^bday, that they are true, and if they are true has the day of miracles ceased?

36 Or have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men? Or has he ^awithheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved? (Christ would have suffered all he did, even for just one of us.)

37 Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that ^amiracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of ^bunbelief, and all is vain.

38 For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also; and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made.

39 But behold, my beloved brethren, I judge better things of you, for I judge that ye have faith in Christ because of your meekness; for if ye have not faith in him then ye are not ^afit to be numbered among the

people of his church.

40 And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning ^ahope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope?

41 And what is it that ye shall ^ahope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have ^bhope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life ^ceternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.

42 Wherefore, if a man have ^afaith he ^bmust needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope. (Faith and hope are closely tied. In one sense, a type of hope, what Alma called "a desire to believe" (Alma 32:27), precedes faith. That is to say, before faith in Christ can be firmly established one must begin with some kind of desire to believe. Then as a person gains the quiet assurance that there is a God, gains a correct understanding of the nature and perfections of God, and gains the assurance from the Lord that his course in life is approved, he is on the pathway of faith. When one has faith in Christ—trusts in his almighty power to forgive and lift and lighten and transform the soul— one begins to gain that hope which comes only as a result of believing in and relying upon the merits and mercy of Christ. Hope in this sense is not a weak and whimpering yearning that lacks even the beginning of assurance. It is not expressed in such thoughts as "I hope I can get to heaven one day," or "I hope the Lord will forgive my sins," or "I hope there's a place for people like me in the celestial kingdom." Rather, to have hope in Christ is to have the peaceful assurance that one is on course, the quiet confidence that in general terms the Lord is pleased with one's efforts, the anticipation of happiness here and glory and honor hereafter. Alma encouraged his people to live in such a way as to allow the Spirit of the Lord to cleanse and direct them, "and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering; having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life" (Alma 13:28-29, italics added). DCBM, 4:342)

43 And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be ^ameek, and lowly of heart.

44 If so, his ^afaith and hope is vain, for none is ^bacceptable before God, save the ^cmeek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and ^dconfesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for **if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.**

45 And ^acharity suffereth long, and is ^bkind, and ^cenvieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily ^dprovoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "Both Paul and Mormon expounded with great inspiration about faith, hope, and charity, in many verses using the same words and phrases. If there is any difference between them it is that Mormon expounds the doctrines more perfectly and persuasively than does Paul. It does not take much insight to know that Mormon and Paul both had before them the writings of some Old Testament prophet on the same subjects." ("The Doctrinal Restoration," in *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, p. 18.) DCBM, 4:343)

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

47 But ^acharity is the pure ^blove of Christ, (Hugh Nibley: "Charity gives to those who don't deserve and expects nothing in return: It is the love God has for us, and the love we have for little children, of whom we expect nothing but for whom we would give everything." (Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 524))and it endureth ^cforever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. (Above all the attributes of godliness and perfection, charity is the one most devoutly to be desired. Charity is more than love, far more; it is everlasting love, perfect love, the pure love of Christ which endureth forever. It is love so centered in righteousness that the possessor has no aim or desire except for the eternal welfare of his own soul and for the souls of those around him. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 121)

48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, ^apray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, (His love for us) which he hath bestowed upon all who are true ^bfollowers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall ^cbe like him, (Christ carries the scars and wounds from his crucifixion. Maybe we too will carry our scars that were necessary to keep the commandments. Maybe we will be like him in our small versions of suffering) for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be ^dpurified even as he is pure. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Infant baptism is an evil abomination—Little children are alive in Christ because of the atonement—Faith, repentance, meekness and lowliness of heart, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end lead to salvation. [Between A.D. 400 and 421] (Why is this chapter in the Book of Mormon? Moroni knew that his time was soon to end. He looked back over the materials he had to see what may have been missing from the plates, so the subject of infant baptism he knew would be necessary for our day. But more importantly, this chapter is about the fall and the atonement.)

1 AN epistle of my ^afather Mormon, written to me, Moroni; and it was written unto me soon after my calling to the ministry. And on this wise did he write unto me, saying: (This epistle was probably written to clarify doctrinal disputes. Moroni must have held some church position where he was in a position to clarify the doctrine.)

2 My beloved son, Moroni, I rejoice exceedingly that your Lord Jesus Christ hath been mindful of you, and hath called you to his ministry, and to his holy work.

3 I am mindful of you always in my prayers, continually praying unto God the Father in the name of his Holy Child, Jesus, that he, through his infinite ^agoodness and ^bgrace, will keep you through the endurance of faith on his name to the end.

4 And now, my son, I speak unto you concerning that which grieveth me exceedingly; for it grieveth me that there should ^adisputations rise among you.

5 For, if I have learned the truth, there have been disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children.

6 And now, my son, I desire that ye should labor diligently, that this gross error should be removed from among you; for, for this intent I have written this epistle.

7 For immediately after I had learned these things of you I inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the ^aword of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost, saying: (This is a quote from Christ in a direct revelation to Mormon, similar to the language in the Doctrine and Covenants.)

8 ^aListen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the ^bwhole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little ^cchildren are ^dwhole, for they are not capable of committing ^esin; ("The revelations state that little children 'cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me' (D&C 29:47). All of us know of deeds performed by little children that may only be described as evil. I am aware of a seven-year-old who in an act of rage killed his brother. The act of murder is a heinous sin. But in this case the child's action is not accounted as sin. Why? Because, in the words of God, 'little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten' (D&C 29:46). Christ explained through Mormon that 'the curse of Adam is taken from [children] in me, that it hath no power over them' (Moroni 8:8). Little children are subject to the pull and effects of the Fall, just as everyone is. They are not, however, held accountable for their act. In summary, little children are saved without any preconditions—without faith, repentance, or baptism. Their innocence is decreed and declared by and through the tender mercies of an all-loving Lord. They are innocent through the Atonement, not because there is no sin in their nature." (Robert L. Millet, Life

in Christ pp. 32-33). DCBM, 4:351-52) wherefore the curse of ^fAdam is taken from them in me, (Even though children have fallen, the atonement covers them) that it hath no power over them; and the law of ^gcircumcision is done away in me. (These verses give the historical context for one of the most significant doctrinal discourses in the Book of Mormon. In the verses that follow, Mormon discusses the doctrine of accountability and the false notion of infant baptism. It appears from this introduction that Moroni had previously been called to an important priesthood position of responsibility. Moroni, in that new stewardship probably wrote to his father concerning an important matter of concern and conflict. In response Mormon gave him some fatherly, as well as some ecclesiastical, counsel concerning a very important doctrinal dispute that had arisen among the Nephites. The record is silent as to what prompted this doctrinal dispute or how the notion of infant baptism had crept in among the people. Mormon's epistle to Moroni is designed to correct any error that has been made or false doctrines that have been taught and to plainly teach the truth of the matter. DCBM, 4:349-50)

9 And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word of God unto me; wherefore, my beloved son, I know that it is solemn ^amockery (This is a mockery of the atonement) before God, that ye should baptize little children. (The washing of little children was a false doctrine instituted in the days of Abraham and refuted by the Lord in a revelation. (JST Gen. 17:3-6. 3 ^aAnd (it came to pass, that) Abram fell on his face: (and called upon the name of the Lord.) And God talked with him, saying, (My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers; And they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them; But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing of children, and the blood of sprinkling; And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me.) 4 (But) As for ~~me~~ (thee), behold, (I will make) my ^acovenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a ^bfather of many ^cnations. 5 (And this covenant I make, that thy children may be known among all nations.) Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be ^aAbraham; (Conversion to Judaism is always accompanied by giving a new name. for men, it is usually Abraham or Ben Avraham (son of Abraham). When blessings are given for health, at marriages, and at other festive occasions, often the "new" or "special" name is used. Old Testament Supplementary Study Materials, p. 13) for a father of many nations have I made thee. 6 And I will make thee exceeding ^afruitful, and I will make ^bnations of thee, and ^ckings shall come ~~out~~ of thee(, and of thy seed).) The Lord on this same occasion made the covenant with Abraham that every male child should be circumcised when eight days old. (Gen. 17:9-12. 9 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, (Therefore) Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. (On April 3, 1836, as part of a magnificent sequence of heavenly manifestations in the newly completed Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery experienced a visitation by Elias, who committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. Thus the continuity of the Lord's ancient covenant program was assured in the latter days. The Lord delights in blessing his children. He gives them places of refuge in this world (lands and gathering places, such as the stakes of Zion). He gives them hope for eternal mansions on high. He makes them fruitful in their posterity and gives them the hope of eternal increase through the blessings of temple marriage. He provides the fullness of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood of God, with its ennobling and redeeming power to grant immortality and eternal life for the valiant who endure to the end. For all of these extraordinary blessings, he asks only that we walk in righteousness and obey his commandments, sharing our witness to the world through his missionary program. Latter-Day Commentary of the Old Testament, p. 78) 10 (And) This is (shall be) my ^acovenant, which ye shall keep, between me and ~~you~~ (thee) and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be ^bcircumcised. 11 And ye shall ^acircumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a ^btoken of the ^ccovenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is ^aeight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or ^bbought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.) The circumcision being performed at eight days was symbolic of the child

becoming accountable at eight years. (see also D&C 68:25-27. 25 And again, inasmuch as ^aparents have children in Zion, or in any of her ^bstakes which are organized, that ^cteach them not to understand the ^ddoctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when ^eeight years old, the ^fsin be upon the heads of the parents. 26 For this shall be a law unto the ^ainhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized. 27 And their children shall be ^abaptized for the ^bremission of their sins when ^ceight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.) Monte S. Nyman, *Studies in Scripture*, 8:302-03)

10 Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach—repentance and baptism unto those who are ^aaccountable and capable of committing sin; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little ^bchildren, and they shall all be saved with their little children.

11 And their little ^achildren need no repentance, (They are incapable of repentance) neither baptism.

(Joseph Fielding Smith has taught, “Children who die in infancy do not have to be endowed. So far as the ordinance of [marriage] sealing is concerned, this may wait until the millennium.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:55)) Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the ^bremission of sins.

12 But little ^achildren are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God, and also a changeable God, and a ^brespector to persons; for how many little children have died without baptism! (“All little children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.” (D&C 137:10.)) We have again the warning voice sounded in our midst, which shows the uncertainty of human life; and in my leisure moments I have meditated upon the subject, and asked the question, why it is that infants, innocent children, are taken away from us, especially those that seem to be the most intelligent and interesting. The strongest reasons that present themselves to my mind are these: This world is a very wicked world; and it is a proverb that the “world grows weaker and wiser”; if that is the case, the world grows more wicked and corrupt. In the earlier ages of the world a righteous man, and a man of God and of intelligence, had a better chance to do good, to be believed and received than at the present day; but in these days such a man is much opposed and persecuted by most of the inhabitants of the earth, and he has much sorrow to pass through here. The Lord takes many away even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again. TPJS, p. 196-97. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none.” (*Teachings*, p. 181.) These little children, being pure, did not need to be tested further. Their gaining of earthly experience, another purpose for coming to mortality, will be provided for them in the millennium. (See *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 453-54.) See also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 2:56-57; Bruce R. McConkie, “The Salvation of Little Children,” *Ensign*, April 1977, p. 6. Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: There are certain spirits who come into this life only to receive bodies; for reasons that we do not know, but which are known in the infinite wisdom of the Eternal Father, they do not need the testing, probationary experiences of mortality. We come here for two great reasons—the first, to get a body; the second, to be tried, examined, schooled, and tested under mortal circumstances, to take a different type of probationary test than we underwent in the pre-mortal life. There are some of the children of our Father, however, who come to earth to get a body—for that reason solely. They do not need the testings of this mortality. (Funeral address) *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, from Zion to Destruction*, 11-12)

13 Wherefore, if little children could not be saved without baptism, these must have gone to an endless hell.

14 Behold I say unto you, that he that supposeth that little children need baptism is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither ^afaith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell. (If you deny the atonement, you cannot have faith, hope and charity, and you are therefore denying the power of Christ.)

15 For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism. (Joseph Smith declared that the mother who laid down her little child, being deprived of the privilege, the joy, and the satisfaction of bringing it up to manhood or womanhood in this world, would, after the resurrection, have all the joy, satisfaction and pleasure, and even more than it would have been possible to have had in mortality, in seeing her child grow to the full measure of the stature of its spirit.” (Gospel Doctrine, p. 453) Joseph Fielding Smith: “Children who die in childhood will not be deprived of any blessing. When they grow, after the resurrection, to the full maturity of the spirit, they will be entitled to all the blessings which they would have been entitled to had they been privileged to tarry here and receive them. “The Lord has arranged for that, so that justice will be given to every soul.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:55)

16 Wo be unto them that shall pervert the ways of the Lord after this manner, for they shall perish except they repent. Behold, I speak with boldness, having ^aauthority from God; and I fear not what man can do; for ^bperfect ^clove ^dcasteth out all fear.

17 And I am filled with ^acharity, which is everlasting love; wherefore, all children are alike unto me; wherefore, I love little children with a perfect love; and they are all alike and ^bpartakers of salvation.

18 For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is ^aunchangeable from ^ball eternity to all eternity.

19 Little ^achildren cannot repent; wherefore, it is awful wickedness to deny the pure mercies of God unto them, for they are all alive in him because of his ^bmercy.

20 And he that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the ^aatonement of him and the power of his redemption.

21 Wo unto such, for they are in danger of death, ^ahell, and an ^bendless torment. I speak it boldly; God hath commanded me. Listen unto them and give heed, or they stand against you at the ^cjudgment-seat of Christ. (It appears that what Mormon is condemning and characterizing as "damning belief" is the rejection of the merciful workings of the Atonement after one understands the role of accountability, the effects of the fall of Adam, and the necessity of the Savior's redemption. When one understands these doctrines and knows the nature of God, yet continues to hold to a view of God as capricious and arbitrary and continues to deny the unconditional aspects of the atonement of Jesus Christ in overcoming both the spiritual and physical deaths that resulted from the Fall, then one will experience a temporary hell until he can repent and acknowledge the saving power and mercy of Christ. DCBM, 4:352)

22 For behold that all little children are ^aalive in Christ, and also all they that are without the ^blaw. (The Lord has made it known by revelation that children born with retarded minds shall receive blessings just like little children who die in infancy. They are free from sin, because their minds are not capable of a correct understanding of right and wrong. Mormon, when writing to his son Moroni on the subject of baptism places deficient children in the same category with little children who are under the age of accountability, they do not require baptism, for the atonement of Jesus Christ takes care of them equally with little children who die before the age of accountability, as follows: For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing. (Moroni 8:22.) Again the Lord has stated: And again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent? And he that hath no understanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written. . . . (D. & C. 29:49-50.) Therefore The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints considers all deficient children with retarded capacity to understand, just the same as little children under the age of accountability. They are redeemed without baptism and will go to the celestial kingdom of God, there, we believe, to have their faculties or other

deficiencies restored according to the Father's mercy and justice. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3: 20-21. Sometimes the questions are raised: Do all little children who die before achieving the age of accountability inherit the celestial kingdom? Will some have to be tested in order to achieve ultimate exaltation? Mormon stresses that all little children and all that "are without the law" are alive in Christ because of His mercy. It is clear from Mormon's words and modern prophetic commentary that all who die without accountability are incapable of sin and repentance and are "redeemed" and "alive in Christ"-meaning they inherit the celestial kingdom. Little children are innocent and pure in this existence and will be pure and innocent in the world to come, and will come forth in the resurrection of the pure in heart at the appropriate time. At the time of the second coming of Christ, wickedness will be cleansed from the face of the earth. The great Millennium will be ushered in with power and then Satan and his hosts will be bound by the righteousness of the people (see 1 Nephi 22:26 And because of the ^arighteousness of his people, ^bSatan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of ^cmany years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel ^dreigneth.). During this glorious era of enlightenment the earth shall be given to the righteous "for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation" (D&C 45:58, italics added) But will not the devil be loosed at the end of the Millennium, some may ask? Could not those who had left mortality without trial be tested during that "little season"? Certainly not, for these children will have already come forth from the graves as resurrected and immortal beings. How could such persons-whose salvation is already assured-possibly be tested? To reason otherwise is to place God and all exalted beings in peril of apostasy. In the words of President Joseph Fielding Smith: "Satan will be loosed to gather his forces after the millennium. The people who will be tempted, will be people living on this earth, and they will have every opportunity to accept the gospel or reject it. Satan will have nothing to do whatever with little children, or grown people who have received their resurrection and entered into the celestial kingdom. Satan cannot tempt little children in this life, nor in the spirit world, nor after their resurrection. Little children who die before reaching the years of accountability will not be tempted." (Doctrines of Salvation 2:56-57.) DCBM, 4:353) For the power of ^credemption cometh on all them that have ^dno law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing—

23 But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in ^adead works.

24 Behold, my son, this thing ought not to be; for ^arepentance is unto them that are under condemnation and under the curse of a broken law. (Several important aspects of the doctrine of the Atonement and the ordinance of baptism are emphasized and clarified by Mormon in this epistle. Baptism is for the remission of sins. In order for baptism to be of efficacy there must also be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and complete repentance. Since little children and those who because of mental or physical deficiencies never mature in the moral or spiritual sense are not accountable (see D&C 20:71 No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the years of ^aaccountability before God, and is capable of ^brepentance.; D&C 29:49-50; 49 And, again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to ^arepent? 50 And he that hath no ^aunderstanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written. And now I declare no more unto you at this time. Amen.), it is impossible for them to sin. Without accountability there is no sin. Without sin there is no need for repentance and baptism. Because little children cannot sin they cannot bring about their own spiritual "fall" or estrangement from God. The only spiritual death they experience, therefore, is that which comes upon all mankind by reason of the fall of Adam. Thus they are "alive in Christ" because the atonement of Jesus Christ has redeemed all, including little children, from the effects-both temporal and spiritual-of the fall of Adam. Those, then, who die without achieving personal accountability are redeemed and saved by the mercy, goodness, and pure love of Christ as evidenced by his atoning sacrifice. They become heirs of the celestial kingdom. (For an extensive doctrinal discussion of this concept see Elder

Bruce R. McConkie, "The Salvation of Little Children," Ensign, April 1977, pp. 3-7) DCBM, 4:350-51)
25 And the first fruits of ^arepentance is ^bbaptism; (Baptism is evidence of our repentance, and partaking of the sacrament is evidence of our continued repentance.) and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth ^cremission of sins; (President Spencer W. Kimball taught that there is no true repentance if we forsake only some selected sins but continue to embrace sinfulness. "That transgressor is not fully repentant who neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, fails in his family prayers, does not sustain the authorities of the Church, breaks the Word of Wisdom, does not love the Lord nor his fellowmen. A reforming adulterer who drinks or curses is not repentant. The repenting burglar who has sex play is not ready for forgiveness. God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life." (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p 203.) DCBM, 4:355)

26 And the remission of sins bringeth ^ameekness, and lowliness of heart; ("To renew the mind of man is the work of the Holy Ghost," Elder Orson Pratt explained. "The Holy Ghost [changes us] more thoroughly by renewing the inner man, and by purifying the affections and desires, and thoughts which have so long been habituated in the impure ways of sin. Without the aid of the Holy Ghost, a person who has long been accustomed to love sin, and whose affections and desires have long run with delight in the degraded channel of vice, would have but very little power to change his mind, at once, from its habituated course and walk, and to walk in newness of life. Though his sins may have been cleansed away yet so great is the force of habit that he would, "without being renewed by the Holy Ghost, be easily overcome, and contaminated again by sin. Hence, it is infinitely important that the affections and desires should be in a measure changed and renewed, so as to cause him to hate that which he before loved, and to love that which he before hated: to renew the mind of man is the work of the Holy Ghost." ("The Holy Spirit," in Orson Pratt: Writings, of an Apostle, p. 57.) DCBM, 4:356) and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the ^bHoly Ghost, which ^cComforter ^dfilleth with hope and perfect ^elove, (Charity and love of others is a gift of the spirit.) which love endureth by ^fdiligence unto ^gprayer, (Charity is a gift that comes by prayer.) until the end shall come, when all the ^hsaints shall dwell with God.

27 Behold, my son, I will write unto you again if I go not out soon against the Lamanites. Behold, the ^apride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction except they should repent.

28 Pray for them, my son, that repentance may come unto them. But behold, I fear lest the Spirit hath ^aceased ^bstriving with them (Chapter 9 shows the result of the spirit ceasing to strive with the people.); and in this part of the land they are also seeking to put down all power and authority which cometh from God; and they are ^cdenying the Holy Ghost.

29 And after rejecting so great a knowledge, my son, they must perish soon, unto the fulfilling of the prophecies which were spoken by the prophets, as well as the words of our Savior himself.

30 Farewell, my son, until I shall write unto you, or shall meet you again. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

A testimony of the Book of Mormon comes by the power of the Holy Ghost—The gifts of the Spirit are dispensed to the faithful—Spiritual gifts always accompany faith—Moroni's words speak from the dust—Come unto Christ, be perfected in him, and sanctify your souls. [About A.D. 421] (The word exhort is used nine times in this chapter.)

1 NOW I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good (Moroni is saying goodbye to us for the third time. This is his last chance to say one more thing to us.); and I write unto my brethren, the ^aLamanites; and I would that they should know that *more than ^bfour hundred and twenty years have passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ.

2 And I ^aseal up ^bthese records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you.

3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how ^amerciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam (The Bible) even down until the time that ye shall receive these things (The Book of Mormon), and ^bponder it in your ^chearts. (Neal A. Maxwell: "Pondering, for most of us, is not something we do easily. It is much more than drifting or daydreaming, for it focuses and stirs us, not lulls us. We must set aside time, circumstances, and attitude in order to achieve it. In Alma's words, we must 'give place' (Alma 32:27). The length of time involved in pondering is not as important as the intensity given to it. Reflection cannot be achieved in the midst of distraction." (That Ye May Believe, p. 184)

4 And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ^aask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not ^btrue; and if ye shall ask with a ^csincere heart, with ^dreal intent, (To act upon the truth we know.) having ^efaith in Christ, he will ^fmanifest the ^gtruth of it (The Book of Mormon) unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Now I am one who knows by the power of the Spirit that this book is true, and as a consequence I also know, both by reason and by revelation from the Spirit, of the truth and divinity of all the great spiritual verities of this dispensation. For instance: I know that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith -- because the Book of Mormon is true. I know that the gospel has been restored and that God has established his Church again on earth -- because the Book of Mormon is true. I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet, that he communed with God entertained angels, received revelations, saw visions, and has gone on to eternal glory -- because the Book of Mormon is true. I know that the Bible is the word of God as far as it is translated correctly -- because the Book of Mormon is true. I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth, the one kingdom with legal administrators who can seal men up unto eternal life -- because the Book of Mormon is true. To my testimony of the Book of Mormon I add that of the Lord God himself, who said Joseph Smith 'has translated the book, . . . and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.' (D&C 17:6.) In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen." (Conference Report, Apr. 1968, p. 21) Joseph Smith: "Search the scriptures...and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to His glory nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation." (Teachings, p. 11-12 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 531))

5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may ^aknow the ^btruth of all things. (In what may be one of the finest explanations of the place of pondering in this process, Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained to the Church: "May I be so bold as to propose a test and issue a challenge. It is hoped that all who take this test will have a knowledge of the Holy Bible, because the more people know about the Bible, the greater their appreciation will be of the Book of Mormon. This test is for saint and sinner alike; it is for Jew and Gentile, for bond and free, for black and white, for all of our Father's children. We have all been commanded to search the scriptures, to treasure up the Lord's word, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God (see D&C 84:44 For you shall ^alive by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.) This, then, is the test. Let every person make a list of from one hundred to two hundred doctrinal subjects, making a conscious effort to cover the whole field of gospel knowledge. The number of subjects chosen will depend on personal inclination and upon how broad the spectrum will be under each subject. "Then write each subject on a blank piece of paper. Divide the paper into two columns; at the top of one, write 'Book of Mormon,' and at the top of the other, 'Bible.' "Then start with the first verse and phrase of the Book of Mormon, and continuing verse by verse and thought by thought, put the substance of each verse under its proper heading. Find the same doctrine in the Old and New Testaments, and place it in the parallel columns. "Ponder the truths you learn, and it will not be long before you know that Lehi and Jacob excel Paul in teaching the Atonement; that Alma's

sermons on faith and on being born again surpass anything in the Bible; that Nephi makes a better exposition of the scattering and gathering of Israel than do Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel combined; that Mormon's words about faith, hope, and charity have a clarity, a breadth, and a power of expression that even Paul did not attain; and so on and so on. "There is another and simpler test that all who seek to know the truth might well take. It calls for us simply to read, ponder, and pray—all in the spirit of faith and with an open mind. To keep ourselves alert to the issues at hand—as we do read, ponder, and pray—we should ask ourselves a thousand times, 'Could any man have written this book?' "And it is absolutely guaranteed that sometime between the first and thousandth time this question is asked, every sincere and genuine truth seeker will come to know by the power of the Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, that it is the mind and will and voice of the Lord to the whole world in our day." (CR, October 1983, p. 106.) DCBM, 4:363-64)

6 And whatsoever thing is good is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is.

7 And ye may ^aknow that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, ^baccording to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow, and forever. (*Daniel H. Ludlow*, director of Church Correlation Review. To understand the promise found in Moroni 10:4, a person should read and ponder the verses immediately before and after. In the first edition of the Book of Mormon (1830), Moroni chapter 10 was all written as one paragraph. Let us examine carefully and individually verses 1-5: Verse 1: "Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good; and I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites; and I would that they should know that more than four hundred and twenty years have passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ." Although Moroni is addressing himself specifically to "the Lamanites," these words, as well as all of the words in the Book of Mormon, apply also to the Jews and the Gentiles. (See title page.) Verse 2: "And I seal up these records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you." The words *these records* refer to the records upon which Moroni was then writing (the plates of Mormon), which were later received by Joseph Smith and translated as the Book of Mormon. Verse 3: "Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts." Too frequently this verse is not quoted in connection with verse four and, when quoted, is often misinterpreted. However, it is a key verse to understanding the full promise of Moroni 10:1-5. When analyzed thoroughly, this verse indicates that the honest seeker after truth must do two things: 1. Read the Book of Mormon. The words *these things* in verse three refer back to the words *these records* in verse two—the records from which our present Book of Mormon was translated. 2. "Ponder" the dealings of God with men as recorded in the Book of Mormon, and then compare them with the dealings of God with men as recorded in the Bible. Although the word Bible is not found in this verse, Moroni indicates that the person should "remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things." The Bible provides a story of the Creation and the history of events from that time forward. However, the account of the Creation and subsequent happenings are not contained in the Book of Mormon. In fact, Moroni had earlier acknowledged that the Book of Mormon would not include this information. In explaining his abridgement of the Book of Ether, Moroni wrote: "And now I, Moroni ... take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether. "And as I suppose that the first part of this record, which speaks concerning the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower, and whatsoever things transpired among the children of men until that time, is had among the Jews— "Therefore I do not write those things which transpired from the days of Adam until that time." (Ether 1:1-4; italics added.) Thus, if a sincere person hasn't gained a testimony of the Book of Mormon after reading it, he should—as Moroni seems to suggest here—read the Bible as well, pondering in his heart both scriptural accounts of

God's dealings with his children. Verse 4: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." Note that the word read is not even included in this verse; rather, the verb is receive. In other words, after the person has (1) read the Book of Mormon and (2) pondered the dealings of God with the peoples of the Book of Mormon and the Bible, he must then put himself in a frame of mind where he would be willing to "receive" or "accept" all these things. Then he must ask "with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ." Sincere pondering of the scriptures helps put a person in an appropriate frame of mind to ask for—and receive—divine guidance. The things we should be in a position to receive (accept) may refer not only to the Book of Mormon, but also to everything mentioned in verses two and three. Similarly, the word *it* near the end of verse four ("he will manifest the truth of it unto you") may refer to the process of God's dealing with men, along with referring to the Book of Mormon itself. In either case, if a person receives "the truth of it," he will believe in (accept) the Book of Mormon. Verse 5: "And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." This verse indicates that the principles contained in the formula for learning truth as explained in verses one through four can also be applied to areas other than learning the truth of the Book of Mormon. As to whether this promise is Moroni's or the Lord's, Doctrine and Covenants 68:4 reads: "And whatsoever they [the Lord's chosen servants] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation." When Moroni "speaks" or writes by the power of the Holy Ghost, his writings represent the "will ... mind ... word ... [and] voice of the Lord." Thus it is appropriate to say this promise comes from the Lord through the writings of Moroni. When a person follows this divine formula, the results are certain: He will gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon. God cannot and does not lie, and his promises made through his prophets are sure. Therefore, any person who claims to have followed the various requirements but says he has not gained a testimony should check to see which step he has not followed faithfully or completely: 1. He should read and ponder the Book of Mormon—all of it. 2. He should remember the methods God has used in working with the peoples of both the Book of Mormon and the Bible—and ponder these things in his heart. 3. He should put himself in a frame of mind where he would be willing to accept (receive) all of "these things"—the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the way God works with men. 4. "With a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ," he should ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ "if these things are not true." 5. He should be able to recognize the promptings and feelings which will be evidences to him of the truth of "these things" (including the Book of Mormon) as they are made manifest unto him "by the power of the Holy Ghost." I Have a Question, Ensign, Mar 1986, p. 50-51)

8 And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the ^agifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are ^bdifferent ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the ^cSpirit of God unto men, to profit them.

9 ^aFor behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may ^bteach the word of wisdom;

10 And to another, that he may ^ateach the word of ^bknowledge by the same Spirit;

11 And to another, exceedingly great ^afaith; and to another, the gifts of ^bhealing by the same Spirit;

12 And again, to another, that he may work mighty ^amiracles;

13 And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things;

14 And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; ("If a man has power to part the veil and converse with angels and with the ministering spirits who dwell in the realms of light, surely this is a gift of the Spirit. Also, how can anyone discern between the spirits sent of God and the evil spirits that do the devil's bidding except by revelation? Among us there are those so endowed." (Bruce R. McConkie, New Witness , p. 374). DCBM, 4:368)

15 And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;

16 And again, to another, the interpretation of ^alanguages and of divers kinds of tongues.

17 And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will. (We are counseled in modern revelation to seek earnestly after the best gifts (D&C

46:8 Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived ^aseek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;), meaning to plead with God in prayer for the gifts of the Spirit, both to avoid deception and to enjoy the sweet fruits of gospel living. President George Q.

Cannon scolded the Latter-day Saints for their complacency in this regard. "We find, even among those who have embraced the Gospel," he observed, "hearts of unbelief. "How many of you, my brethren and sisters, are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow? How many of you, when you bow before your Heavenly Father in your family circle or in your secret places, contend for these gifts to be bestowed upon you? How many of you ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to manifest Himself to you through these powers and these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges, without having any feeling on the subject, without exercising any faith whatever; content to be baptized and be members of the Church, and to rest there, thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this? I say to you, in the name of the Lord, as one of His servants, that you have need to repent of this. You have need to repent of your hardness of heart, of your indifference, and of your carelessness.

There is not that diligence, there is not that faith, there is not that seeking for the power of God that there should be among a people who have received the precious promises we have I say to you that it is our duty to avail ourselves of the privileges which God has placed within our reach.... I feel to bear testimony to you, my brethren and sisters,... that God is the same to-day as He was yesterday; that God is willing to bestow these gifts upon His children.... If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. Have I imperfections? I am full of them. What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct these imperfections. If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and his kind. Am I an envious man? It is my duty to seek for charity, which envieth not. So with all the gifts of the Gospel. They are intended for this purpose. No man ought to say, 'Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.' He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lack wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning His Church. He wants His Saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts, and bestows them upon those who seek after them, in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth, notwithstanding their many weaknesses, because God has promised to give the gifts that are necessary for their perfection." (Millennial Star, vol. 56 [1894], pp. 260-61.) DCBM, 4:369-70)

18 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that ^aevery good ^bgift cometh of Christ. (By the grace of God — following devotion, faith, and obedience on man's part — certain special spiritual blessings called gifts of the Spirit are bestowed upon men. Their receipt is always predicated upon obedience to law, but because they are freely available to all the obedient, they are called gifts.

They are signs and miracles reserved for the faithful and for none else. Moroni says that the gifts of God come from Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost and by the Spirit of Christ. (Moro. 10.) In other words, the gifts come by the power of that Spirit who is the Holy Ghost, but the Spirit of Christ (or light of Christ) is the agency through which the Holy Ghost operates. Their purpose is to enlighten, encourage, and edify the faithful so that they will inherit peace in this life and be guided toward eternal life in the world to come. Their presence is proof of the divinity of the Lord's work; where they are not found, there the Church and kingdom of God is not. The promise is that they shall never be done away as long as the earth continues in its present state, except for unbelief (Moro. 10:19), but when the perfect day comes and the saints obtain exaltation, there will be no more need for them. As Paul expressed it, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13.) Faithful persons are expected to seek the gifts of the Spirit with all their hearts. They are to "covet earnestly the

best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31; D. & C. 46:8), to "desire spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. 14:1), "to ask of God, who giveth liberally." (D. & C. 46:7; Matt. 7:7-8.) To some will be given one gift; to others, another; and "unto some it may be given to have all those gifts, that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby." (D. & C. 46:29.) From the writings of Paul (1 Cor. 12; 13; 14), and of Moroni (Moro. 10), and from the revelations received by Joseph Smith (D. & C. 46), we gain a clear knowledge of spiritual gifts and how they operate. Among others, we find the following gifts named either in these three places or elsewhere in the scriptures: the gift of knowing by revelation "that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world" (D. & C. 46:13), and also the gift of believing the testimony of those who have gained this revelation; the gifts of testimony, of knowing that the Book of Mormon is true, and of receiving revelations; the gifts of judgment, knowledge, and wisdom; of teaching, exhortation, and preaching; of teaching the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge; of declaring the gospel and of ministry; the gift of faith, including power both to heal and to be healed; the gifts of healing, working of miracles, and prophesy; the viewing of visions, beholding of angels and ministering spirits, and the discerning of spirits; speaking with tongues, the interpretation of tongues, the interpretation of languages, and the gift of translation; the differences of administration in the Church and the diversities of operation of the Spirit; the gift of seership, "and a gift which is greater can no man have." (Mosiah 8:16; Alma 9:21; D. & C. 5:4; 43:3-4; Rom. 12:6-8.) And these are by no means all of the gifts. In the fullest sense, they are infinite in number and endless in their manifestations. Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 314. The fact that this information is included in three separate sets of scriptures ought to make us aware of how important these principles are.)

19 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the ^asame yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the ^bunbelief of the children of men.

20 Wherefore, there must be ^afaith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

21 And except ye have ^acharity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.

22 And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in ^adespair; and despair cometh because of iniquity. (Living a righteous life brings hope. Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, the idea that he actually exists. Secondly, a correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith)

23 And Christ truly said unto our fathers: ^aIf ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient unto me.

24 And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be ^abecause of ^bunbelief.

25 And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be ^anone that doeth good among you, no not one. For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God.

26 And wo unto them who shall do these things away and die, for they ^adie in their ^bsins, and they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God; and I speak it according to the words of Christ; and I lie not.

27 And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my ^awords unto you, which were written by this man, like as one ^bcrying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the ^cdust?

28 I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of

the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall ^ahiss (a signal whistle. When the Book of Mormon comes forth, that is the call for Israel to gather) forth from generation to generation.

29 And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is ^atrue. (God will testify that the Book of Mormon is true. He has done that)

30 And again I would exhort you that ye would ^acome unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good ^bgift, and ^ctouch not the evil gift, nor the ^dunclean thing. (Avoid evil, temptations)

31 And ^aawake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of ^bZion; and ^cstrengthen thy ^dstakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest ^eno more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

32 Yea, ^acome unto Christ, and be ^bperfected in him, (Stephen E. Robinson has described the process as follows: "Perfection comes through the Atonement of Christ. We become one with him, with a perfect being. And as we become one, there is a merger. Some of my students are studying business, and they understand it better if I talk in business terms. You take a small bankrupt firm that's about ready to go under and merge it with a corporate giant. What happens? Their assets and liabilities flow together, and the new entity that is created is solvent.... Spiritually, this is what happens when we enter into the covenant relationship with our Savior. We have liabilities, he has assets. He proposes to us a covenant relationship. I use the word 'propose' on purpose because it is a marriage of a spiritual sort that is being proposed. That is why he is called the Bridegroom. This covenant relationship is so intimate that it can be described as a marriage. I become one with Christ, and as partners we work together for my salvation and my exaltation. My liabilities and his assets flow into each other. I do all that I can do, and he does what I cannot yet do. The two of us together are perfect." ("Believing Christ: A Practical Approach to the Atonement," 1989-90 BYU Devotional and Fireside Speeches, pp. 120-21.) DCBM, 4:373) and ^cdeny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and ^dlove God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be ^eperfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. (Notice that when perfection is mentioned it is to be perfect in Christ. We cannot do it alone. It is only done with Christ's atonement.)

33 And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye ^asanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the ^bblood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your ^csins, that ye become ^dholy, without spot.

34 And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to ^arest in the ^bparadise of God, until my ^cspirit and body shall again ^dreunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the ^eair, to meet you before the ^fpleasing (Let's hope that for us, the judgment experience will be pleasing to us like it was to be for Moroni.) bar of the great ^gJehovah, the Eternal ^hJudge of both quick and dead. Amen. (Jeffrey R. Holland: "Thus the Book of Mormon ends, flying as it were with Moroni, on the promise of the Holy Resurrection. (Rev 14:6) That is most fitting, for this sacred testament—written by prophets, delivered by angels, protected by God—speaks as one 'crying from the dead,' (v. 27) exhorting all to come unto Christ and be perfected in him, a process culminating in the perfection of celestial glory. In anticipation of that triumphant hour, God has set his hand for the last time to gather Jew, Gentile, Lamanite, and all the house of Israel. The Book of Mormon is his New Covenant memorializing that grand latter-day endeavor. All who receive it and embrace the principles and ordinances it declares will one day see the Savior as he is, and they will be like him. They will be sanctified and redeemed through the grace of his innocent blood. They will be purified even as he is pure. They will be holy and without spot. They will be called the children of Christ." (Christ And The New Covenant, p. 339))

* Verse 1 [About A.D. 421].

THE END

(As we conclude the study of the Book of Mormon, my testimony is that it is true.)

Additional Reading:

BIBLE DICTIONARY LIGHT OF CHRIST

The phrase “light of Christ” does not appear in the Bible, although the principles that apply to it are frequently mentioned therein. The precise phrase is found in Alma 28: 14, Moro. 7: 18, and D&C 88: 7. Biblical phrases that are sometimes synonymous to the term “light of Christ” are “spirit of the Lord” and “light of life” (see, for example, John 1: 4; John 8: 12). The “spirit of the Lord,” however, sometimes is used with reference to the Holy Ghost, and so must not be taken in every case as having reference to the light of Christ.

The light of Christ is just what the words imply: enlightenment, knowledge, and an uplifting, ennobling, persevering influence that comes upon mankind because of Jesus Christ. For instance, Christ is “the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 93: 2; John 1: 9). The light of Christ fills the “immensity of space” and is the means by which Christ is able to be “in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things.” It “giveth life to all things” and is “the law by which all things are governed.” It is also “the light that quickeneth” man’s understanding (see D&C 88: 6-13, 41). In this manner, the light of Christ is related to man’s conscience and tells him right from wrong (cf. Moro. 7: 12-19).

The light of Christ should not be confused with the personage of the Holy Ghost, for the light of Christ is not a personage at all. Its influence is preliminary to and preparatory to one’s receiving the Holy Ghost. The light of Christ will lead the honest soul who “hearkeneth to the voice” to find the true gospel and the true Church and thereby receive the Holy Ghost (see D&C 84: 46-48). Additional references are Alma 19: 6; Alma 26: 3; D&C 20: 27.

(President Gordon B. Hinckley said: I would like to urge every man and woman... and every boy and girl who is old enough to read to again read the Book of Mormon during this coming year... There is nothing we could do of greater importance than to have fortified in our individual lives an unshakable conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Living Son of the Living God... That is the purpose of the coming forth of this remarkable and wonderful book. Church News, 4 May 1996, p. 2. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon. CR, Oct, 1961, p. 18. President Ezra Taft Benson: The Book of Mormon is studied in our Sunday School and seminary classes every fourth year. This four-year pattern, however, must not be followed by Church members in their personal and family study. We need to read daily from the pages of the book that will get a man nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book. CR, Oct 1988, p. 3.)