



Type: Book Chapter

---

## Some of the Fundamental Doctrines of the Book of Mormon

Author(s): Janne M. Sjö Dahl

Source: *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927

Pages: 502–543

---

**Abstract:** No abstract available.

“Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend \* \* \* retain in remembrance the greatness of God and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the Angel.”—(King Benjamin, Mos. 4:9, 11.)

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

**T**HIS attempt at an introduction to the study of the Book of Mormon would be incomplete without a brief statement of some of the fundamental doctrines of this wonderful record.

#### CONCERNING GOD

*The Cosmological Argument.* The Book of Mormon resembles the Bible in this respect that it takes the existence of God for granted. Handbooks on theology generally begin by stating the philosophical arguments supposed to *prove* that there is a supreme Being, but God's books do not argue that question. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is the sublime opening statement of the Bible. One of the first incidents told in the Book of Mormon is that of a vision of the Prophet Lehi, in which he sees "God sitting upon his throne, [surrounded by numerous concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God." (1 Ne. 1:8.) There is no attempt at argument; no appeal to the reasoning faculty of man; only a plain statement of a sublime fact, in the simplest possible language: *God Is.*

And yet, when the inspired writer has occasion to rebuke atheism, he applies the cosmological argument with the greatest possible force. He says:

"If there be no God, we are not, for there could have been no creation." (2 Ne. 11:7.)

That argument is unanswerable.

Philosophers have, indeed, asserted that God is not needed to account for the existence of worlds. Matter itself, they have told us, possesses all the potency necessary to account for all established facts. In this conclusion vast numbers in our superficial age concur and, at least pretend to, find satisfaction. If published accounts are true,<sup>1</sup> atheism is spreading with astonishing rapidity, not only among the illiterate but in our schools, colleges and universities, as well as outside our institutions of learning, as a result of intense propaganda of a strong association for the advancement of atheism.

The aims of this association are freely stated: Do away with chaplains in congress, legislatures, and in the army and navy. Recognize no religious festivals. Stop "bootlegging" Bible and religion in the schools. Use no Bibles to take an oath on. Do away with Christian morality. Take "In God We Trust" off the coins.

This program has been adopted by numerous organizations, calling themselves the society of "Damned Souls," "The Society of Godless," "God's Black Sheep," "The Devil's Angels," and other similar names. One of their publications has the following blasphemous paragraph:

"The Greek Zeus used to strike fear into the hearts of all but the most courageous. Today he is a harmless, powerless relic. Jupiter made the Romans hit the sawdust trail, but

---

<sup>1</sup>*Literary Digest*, July 2, 1927.

today even a Christian Fundamentalist isn't afraid to thumb his nose at this scepterless God. If history repeats itself—and they say it does—perhaps some day the bewhiskered Jewish—[let us leave the sacred name out]—will no longer be 'Big Bad Bill.'<sup>2</sup>

Against such ignorant, blasphemous, arrogant atheism, the writers of the Book of Mormon stand up, as it were from their graves, in righteous rebuke. They say, in substance: You atheists, you materialists, you monists, etc., do not go far enough in your negation. You deny the existence of God, but, in order to be consistent, you must also deny the existence of the land in which you live, and the mountains, the islands, the forests, the animals, the plants, the earth, the sea, the sun, the stars, and, above all, your own existence, and say that the whole creation is only imagination. To admit the reality of the creation and then deny the existence of the Creator is an inconsistency, a self-contradiction, impossible in the reasoning of any intelligent being.

The Book of Mormon testifies to the existence of God (2 Ne. 2:13, 14; 11:7; Mor. 9:19) against all forms of atheism, and gives us as complete a picture of the Godhead as we in our mortal state, can perceive.

*Three Persons in the Godhead.* According to the Book of Mormon, as well as the Bible, there are three glorious, exalted, sovereign persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Originally the term *God* included the entire plurality of divine personages, and even archangels

<sup>2</sup>*Literary Digest* for July 2, 1927.

and angels. The divine name, *Elohim* (the plural form) proves the plurality, but gradually that form of the word became the name of the supreme Ruler of the universe. He is the Elohim, the mighty One, also called the Father,<sup>3</sup> and the plural form of the name is retained to denote the greatness of his majesty, power and glory. Generally, when the name is used without any qualification, it stands for the first *Person* in the Godhead.

*The Father: Two Theories.* There are two main theories concerning the relationship of God, the Father, to the children of men.

One conceives of God chiefly in cold juridic terms. He is an absolute sovereign, an avenger of sin for his own glory, meeting out punishment in an eternal fire, merely to satisfy his hunger and thirst for justice. In this concept of God, man comes in as a corrupt, diseased or otherwise defective being, utterly helpless. Some have even gone so far as to assert that God decreed that a certain number of human beings were created for the purpose of sinning, in order that the Creator might have a chance to send them to eternal torment and thereby display his own power and glory.

Christ taught the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and that is the other conception of the relationship between God and man. It is as old as mankind. Christ revived

---

<sup>3</sup>"The words 'Yahweh our Gods,' which show that Yahweh was identified with the Gods, *Elohim*, of the polytheistic period of the ancient Hebrew religion; it is, however, possible that when the verse in Deuteronomy was written the word Elohim had come to mean the Great God of the Hebrews, although originally it had meant a collection of sacred divine beings." (E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. 1, p. 141.)

it. His disciples proclaimed it and endeavored to put it into practice. It was almost lost sight of again until the Reformation, when it was brought to the attention of those who yearned for human liberty, and it contributed greatly to the success of the world struggles which culminated in the form of government upon which our republic rests. For this government recognizes human rights as between man and man, rulers and ruled, and it has become clear that God himself, who raised up men to institute this government, surely respects the rights and privileges he has given his children, which are the very foundation of their responsibility as free agents.

With the attention thus turned to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, the life of Christ has been studied more closely than ever, since it is in Christ that God, the Father, is most clearly revealed.

In the Book of Mormon God is revealed as the Eternal Father, the Creator, Omnipotent, Infinite in perfection, in wisdom, goodness, in love and mercy, as well as justice. He reigns supreme and he proclaims his Son to the children of men: "Behold my beloved Son, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him."

*References:* 1 Ne. 11:21; 13:40; Mos. 15:4; 1 Ne. 17:36; 2 Ne. 2:14; Jac. 4:9; 1 Ne. 1:14; Mos. 3:5; 3 Ne. 12:48; 2 Ne. 1:10; 2 Ne. 1:15; 4:21; 26:24; Mos. 4:11; Jac. 3:2; Mos. 13:14; 1 Ne. 16:35; 2 Ne. 9:17, 26, 46; Mos. 3:38; 1 Ne. 22:26; Mos. 3:5; 12:21; 3 Ne. 11:3-7.

It is perfectly clear from this, that God, in the Book of Mormon, is revealed as a sovereign, but who rules as a wise, good, loving and just Father in the

midst of his family; not as an Eastern despot in the midst of slaves and sycophants. He is the supreme Ruler of beings to whom he has given free agency, and he rules under the celestial law of Common Consent. In his sovereignty he controls even that which seems accidental. Even seemingly trifling means and sometimes the wicked, serve, unknown to themselves, his purposes. He forgives the repentant sinner. He hears and answers prayer, and he takes care of those who put their trust in him, as loving, obedient children.

*References:* 1 Ne. 16:20; Alma 19:36; 26:37; 29:8; Jac. 7:22; Alma 33:4-6; Mos. 27:14; 3 Ne. 17:15-21.

*The Son.* There is a tendency among modern professors of Christianity to accept the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, on the slippery ground that every human is divine. This, they argue, follows from the fact that all nature is permeated by the divine, supreme essence. In one sense, they say, all men are divine, and Christ is no more divine than we all are, or than all existing creatures are, for that matter. The only difference between him and us is, in their view, this, that he realized that he was divine, while we hope to be able to realize our divinity—some day.

It is not denied that there is some truth in the conception of a universal divinity. We are all God's children. But Christ is much more than a child among children. He is the Creator, our Savior, our Redeemer, the Captain of our Salvation, the Mediator between the Father and the rest of God's children. And that is a great difference.

The Book of Mormon is a mighty witness for the divine character and mission of our Lord.

This record states expressly that he is God: "There is a God, and he is Christ." He is "the Eternal God," and "God Omnipotent." He who died for us is the "Creator," the "Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things." He is "the Father," the "Eternal Father," the "*Beginning* and the *End*, the *First* and the *Last*." He is so intimately associated with God, the Father, that, in his relation to the children of men, he is both the Father and the Son. He stands in God's stead. God has delegated to him all power in heaven and on earth, and he is one member of the great, divine, presiding and governing Council of Three, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whose communion baptism in his name and by his authority admits the redeemed child of God. He is, furthermore, "without beginning of days or end of years."

*References:* 2 Ne. 11:7; 26:12; Mos. 5:15; 2 Ne. 9:5; Hel. 14:12; Mos. 7:27; Alma 11:38, 39; 3 Ne. 11:27; Mos. 15:2; Ether 3:14; Alma 13:9.

But although he is, in this sense, God, the Father, God, clothed in majesty and power and glory, he is also the Son of God; he is the "Beloved Son," in whom the Father has glorified his name; he is the "Only Begotten Son," and also the "Redeemer" and the "Lamb of God," and the only "Savior" of mankind.

*References:* 1 Ne. 10:17; 11:17; Alma 13:16; Hel. 3:28; 3 Ne. 9:15; 3 Ne. 11:7; Jacob 4:5, 11; Alma 12:33, 34; Hel. 5:12; Alma 34:7, 14; Mos. 16:13; Alma 38:9; Moro. 3:3; Mos. 15:1-4; Ether 3:14.

It may be seen from these references that in the Book of Mormon Christ is, as already stated, revealed as "being the Father and the Son." This is explained thus: "Because he dwelleth in the flesh, he shall be called the Son of God," and the Father "because he was conceived by the power of God," thus becoming the Father and the Son.

*The miraculous birth of Christ* is clearly stated in this Record. He was born of a virgin, conceived "by the power of the Holy Ghost."

*References:* I Ne. 11:14-23; Alma 7:9, 10.

The doctrine of the virgin birth of our Lord has been assailed even by some who profess to believe in his divine mission. But alas! for the inconsistency of skepticism. Our Savior either began his mission on earth as Matthew and Luke state, or else Christianity is a fraud *in toto*. The evidence for this stupendous miracle is of a different nature from the evidence for the miraculous life and the resurrection of our Lord. The latter is of a public character, resting on his public administration and teachings; the former is of an entirely private character, originally known only to the few, most intimate friends of the mother. It could not, clearly, have been a subject of public discourses during her life time. And yet, the account must have come from Mary herself, who, as Luke informs us, "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19), as she, naturally, would do her most sacred experience in life. In rejecting, then, the virgin birth of Christ, the testimony of his own mother is set aside as false. Can a *Christian* do that? No, a true Christian will

contemplate the character as well as the work of his Savior and exclaim with Paul: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

*The Holy Ghost.* The third person in the great divine Council of Three is the Holy Ghost, also called the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of the Lord. In 1 Ne. 11:11, if I read the passage correctly, Nephi in his prophetic vision sees him as a personage of spirit, in the form of man. He sees him coming down out of heaven at the baptism of our Lord. He represents him as the exalted Person who confers divine authority on the servants of God; who sanctifies those that, through faith and repentance, enter the High Priesthood; who imparts knowledge, faith, the gift to speak, power to ordain to the Priesthood, and "many" other gifts of God, enumerated in Moroni 10:9-19.

*References:* 1 Ne. 11:27; 2 Ne. 31:8; 1 Ne. 10:22; Alma 13:12; Ether 12:33; 3 Ne. 16:4; Jac. 7:12; Moro. 19:7; 2 Ne. 26:13; 2 Ne. 32:3; 33:1; Moro. 3:4; 10:8-19.

It is the Holy Ghost that "bears record," or testifies, of the Father and of the Son. He manifests, or expounds, the word of God. It is, therefore, a great sin to deny him, or to contend against him.

*References:* Ether 11:36; 1 Ne. 10:11; Moro. 8:9; 2 Ne. 28:4; Alma 34:38; 39:5, 6.

The three are *one*, but not one individual person. They are three persons, in one great divine council.

"The Godhead is a type of unity in the attributes, powers, and purposes of its members. Jesus, while on earth, and in

manifesting himself to his Nephite servants, repeatedly testified of the unity existing between himself and the Father, and between them both and the Holy Ghost. This cannot rationally be construed to mean that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one in person, nor that the names represent the same individual under different aspects. \* \* \* Immediately before his betrayal, Christ prayed for his disciples, the Twelve, and other converts, that they should be preserved in unity, 'that they all may be one' as the Father and the Son are one. We cannot assume that Christ prayed that his followers lose their individuality and become one person, even if a change so directly opposed to nature were possible." (Dr. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 40.)

*References:* 3 Ne. 11:27, 36; 28:10; Alma 11:44; Mormon 7:7.

The doctrine of some modern philosophers that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are merely terms expressing three modes in which the all-permeating divine essence relates itself to the experience of man finds no support in the Book of Mormon. Nor does this Book teach that in the Father we see "the Absolute in its original oneness;" in the Son its "self objectification," and in the Spirit "the reunion of the two"—a set of phrases, the uselessness of which is their most conspicuous feature. On the contrary, the Book of Mormon, as the Bible, teaches, I repeat, that there are three distinct persons, perfectly united in their divine council, in their plans and purposes; united into one in the same sense, as Dr. Talmage reminds us, that Jesus, our Lord, was, and is, one with the Twelve.

The doctrine is exceedingly clear in the Book of Mormon:

"And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the

only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God without end." (2 Ne. 31:21.)

Again:

"Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God." (Alma 11:44.)<sup>4</sup>

*The Holy Spirit.* But, according to the Book of Mormon, as well as other scripture, there is also a Holy Spirit, sometimes called the Holy Ghost, which is not a person, but rather a divine essence, a force, or fluid—for want of a better term—which permeates all that exists. It is the medium through which God communicates with the world, and more especially with his children. It is through the presence of this holy, divine spirit that order is preserved in the universe. Were this mighty force withdrawn, the world would return to chaos. The planets would stop revolving in their wonted courses. The fountains of the great deep would again break its fetters and overflow; and even human society would fall into ruins. It is that Spirit, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." It is through his Spirit that Christ gives light to all and all things. It "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space; it is the light which is in all things; which giveth life to all things; which is the law by which all things are governed; even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things." (Doc. and Cov. 88:4-13.) It is through

---

<sup>4</sup>"Let me tell you, the Holy Ghost is a man; he is one of the sons of our Father and our God; and he is that man that stood next to Jesus Christ, just as I stand by Brother Brigham."—(Heber C. Kimball, Aug. 23, 1857; *Jour. of Dis.*, Vol. 5, p. 179. Compare 1 Ne. 11:11.)

this Spirit that God "is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things." (Doc. and Cov. 88:41.)

It is this Spirit that is imparted to the repentant believer who receives baptism and the laying on of hands by an authorized servant of the Lord. And it is through this Spirit that the spiritual gifts are distributed.

*References:* 1 Ne. 3:20; 13:12; Alma 5:47; Hel. 5:45; Moro. 10:8, 9; 3 Ne. 19:9-23.

#### CONCERNING MAN

*Origin.* In the Book of Mormon, as in the other inspired scriptures, the two-fold nature of man—body and spirit—is clearly recognized. The spirit "possesses" the body. At death there is a separation between the two, and at the time of resurrection they are again united. These two, the spirit and the body united, is Man, and man thus constituted is of divine origin.

*References:* 2 Ne. 9:6; 9:22; Alma 11:41-45; 2 Ne. 26:4, 5; Moroni 7:41.

Adam, the progenitor of the race, is the son of God. He was the first man. And he obtained existence on this earth, in a body, by a special act of creation. And not only that, but he was created in the image of God; that is to say, the man was created after the body of the spirit of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> His spiritual body was the pattern for our mortal bodies.

<sup>5</sup>"All men in the beginning have I created after the body of my spirit. (Ether 3:14-17.) This is the only place in the Book of Mormon where pre-existence is clearly spoken of, and this was revealed before the organization of the Church." (Orson Pratt, *Jour. of Dis.*, Vol. 3, p. 352.)

*References:* Alma 34:34; 18:34, 36; 22:10; Mos. 7:27; 1 Ne. 17:36; 2 Ne. 2:12, 15; 29:7; Mos. 2:20; Morm. 3:20; 9:12; Ether 1:3.

The doctrine of creation is contrary to any other explanation of the origin of man. It is particularly opposed to the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Lamarck and their various and diverse schools of disciples—theories that have been facetiously characterized as “the gospel of dirt.” By recognizing the Fatherhood of God, it sets aside the speculations of philosophers, whose indisputable aim it is to account for the existence of the world without God.

*Man a Free Agent.* According to the Book of Mormon, man is a free agent. He is capable of discerning between good and evil, light and darkness, sin and righteousness, and to choose one thing and reject the other.

*References:* 2 Ne. 2:27-29; 17:15; Helaman 14:30.

On this point modern thought generally agrees with the Book of Mormon. The old, fatalistic conception that man is merely, as it were, a stone thrown by a supreme Being from the precipice of time into the abyss of eternity, necessarily describing a certain arc in its course and stopping in a predetermined place at a predetermined time, is no longer held. The very existence of a consciousness in man of his duty to do certain things and to avoid others presupposes, it is admitted, free agency. For none can feel it a duty to do what is known to be impossible.

But why, then, did Adam fall?

*The Fall.* On that question the Book of Mormon is explicit.

The old orthodox view has been that although our first parents were created innocent and holy, they were deceived by the fallen angel, sinned and fell from the original state of moral perfection, and thereby brought death, sin, and endless misery upon their children and all creation.

Modern thought has tried to get rid of the story of the fall entirely, explaining it as a venerable myth. Evolutionists have seen in the story a proof of their theory of the descent of man from a brute ancestry; forgetting the apparent fact that there is not a brute that does not stand higher than the moral level of a great many depraved, debased human beings, thus furnishing no starting point there for a supposed upward evolution.

According to the Book of Mormon, the fall was a necessary part of the "great plan." "Adam and Eve were in the beginning eternal beings, and were not under the ban of mortal death. Subject to death they must become, however, if their posterity should inherit corruptible bodies. The fall, then, was a deliberate use of law, by which act Adam and Eve became mortal, and could beget mortal children."<sup>6</sup>

The story of the fall is not a myth. It is a record, in poetic, highly figurative, language, of an actual occurrence. It is a record of the transition of man from a state of innocent, childlike purity, to that of a more mature age, when, the immediate divine tutelage having been completed, Adam was

---

<sup>6</sup>Dr. John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, p. 47.

prepared to begin for himself the struggle for existence and progress. And so, "Adam fell that man might be."

All the particulars of the story are not clear. That Adam and Eve, were, literally, our ancestors, and that the "serpent" was Lucifer, the rebellious outcast from heaven, is certain. Just what facts are represented by the symbolism of the tree, the fruit, the eating, etc., is not obvious. The tree of life, which Lehi saw in his dream, the angel explains, was "a representation of the love of God," as manifested in the earthly mission of his only begotten Son. (1 Ne. 11:20-33; 15:33.) In Indian legends, a tree with four roots represents the brotherhood of man.

In the same way, we may be sure, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, in the narrative of the fall, represent important realities in the experience of our first ancestors.

The consequences of the partaking of the forbidden tree by our first parents were that they came in possession of knowledge of good and evil but were "cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord." This was "death." And in this condition they became self-willed, "carnal, sensual and devilish." (Alma 42:3-10.) That was a "fall" which called for a plan of salvation. God supplied that plan, and thereby the fall became a "fall upward."

*The Atonement.* A plan of salvation, as has just been stated, had already been prepared. On this subject the Book of Mormon is exceedingly clear. But for the atonement all mankind would perish. The

atonement was effected through the sufferings and death of the Son of God. He took upon himself the transgressions of his people, and atoned for the sins of the world. His atonement is specially for those "who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned." That includes all who have died outside the light of revelation. The atonement satisfies the demands of justice. Mercy comes because of the atonement, and it brings about the resurrection and makes it possible for the children of Adam to return to the presence of God.

*References:* Mos. 4:7; 13:28; Alma 34:9; Alma 33:22; 34:8; 36:17; Mos. 3:11; 2 Ne. 25:16; 2 Ne. 9:26; Alma 42:23.

The modern spirit of so-called enlightenment is entirely out of sympathy with the Christian doctrine of atonement. It has placed man on a pedestal of independence, where he seems to have no need of the divine plan of salvation. But the fact remains: Outside this plan the world is "dead." Through Christ alone can man regain "paradise lost."

"The inference that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a Christian organization is too absurd to require any extended comment. The foundation upon which the Church rests is faith in God the eternal Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which constitute the Godhead. The Church teaches and its members testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that by him the worlds were created, and that through the redemption wrought out, because of the atonement which he made, all mankind are redeemed from death, the penalty which was pronounced upon our father Adam because of transgression, and that through obedience to the doctrines which he taught we may be redeemed from personal sin. We

bear witness to the world that there is no other name under heaven, nor is there any other means by which man can attain to glory, exaltation and eternal life except through the medium of Christ our Lord.”<sup>7</sup>

### CONCERNING THE CHURCH

*Two Opinions.* There are two widely differing opinions concerning the nature, characteristics and mission of the church. One is that it is a kind of religious-political world organization, existing for the purpose of keeping the “masses” in subjection and providing them with bliss hereafter, on condition that they do their duties here patiently and comply with the rules of the church. Outside this organization, according to this view, there is no salvation. The other opinion, held by many Protestants, is that the church is no organization at all, but merely the sum total of all believers in our Lord, whom he, and none else, knows as his. According to this opinion, one visible church organization is about as good as another. They are all aiming at the same goal, and the members of the many churches, if they are honest and sincere, will reach the one blissful abode by different routes. It is like traveling to the same Rome by a hundred converging roads.

In the Book of Mormon, both these views are met.

*The Church of God.* Already about 147 years before our era, the Prophet Alma founded a church that was called “The Church of God” or, “The Church of Christ,” in the land of Mormon. The

<sup>7</sup>From a conference sermon by Pres. Anthony W. Ivins, April 3, 1927.

prophet held meetings at the Waters of Mormon. Multitudes gathered to hear him, and those who believed were united as members of the church. They had repented of their sins and by faith embraced the redemption that God has provided. But this was not enough. (1) They were desirous of coming into the fold of God. (2) They wanted to be called his people. (3) They were willing to bear one another's burdens, to make them lighter. (4) They were willing to mourn with those that mourned and comfort those that needed comfort. (5) They were willing to be witnesses for God in all places and at all times, in order that they might be numbered with the redeemed in the first resurrection, and have eternal life. Such being their desire, they were qualified to enter the church by baptism. None else could be a worthy member.

The church was, at it still is, a tangible organization, and the members covenanted with God, in their baptism, that they would serve him and keep his commandments.

*References:* Mos. 18:1-17.

*Officers.* As an organization the church had officials, whose mission it was to watch over the members as shepherds. These were to be "men of God." Alma says: "Trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments."

Alma, the founder of the Church, was its High Priest. By the authority of the Lord he appointed priests and teachers and consecrated them, and none received authority to officiate in these callings except

through him. The calling of a priest was to preach and teach the people concerning the kingdom of God, and in the church founded by Alma there was one priest to every 50 members. The order of the High Priesthood is "after the order of the Son of God," without beginning and without end. Those who held it were to labor with their own hands for their support.

In addition to the High Priest and priests there were elders and teachers. Nephihah was an elder, who, with the consent of the people, was by Alma, the High Priest, appointed both lawgiver, judge, and executive, in order that he himself might have more time to preach. This was an emergency measure, at a time when pride, prosperity and iniquity threatened the community with destruction.

The special functions of these ministers may be gathered from Mos. 26:1-7, where we read that when it became necessary to admonish unbelievers on behalf of the church, they were delivered, by the teachers to the priests, and by these they were brought before the High Priest.

*References:* Mos. 18:18, 24; 23:14-16, 17, 18; Alma 4:18; 5:3; 8:23; 13:2-9; 10:19; Alma 1:7; 4:11-20.

In his vision, Nephi saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, that were to be appointed in due time, and especially the Apostle John, who has left his imprint upon the gospel message of the Redeemer in the latter days as well as formerly. When our Savior came to his people in the land of Bountiful he called twelve disciples and endowed them with authority to teach and to baptize. The names of the Twelve were,

Nephi, Timothy, Jonas, Mathoni, Mathonihah, Kumen, Kumenonhi, Jeremiah, Shemnon, Jonas, Zedekiah and Isaiah.

Nephi and Timothy were brothers and Jonas I., was the son of Nephi. Timothy had been raised from the dead. Mathoni and Mathoniha were brothers. Nephi was baptized first. Then he baptized the others who had been chosen. After their baptism the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) fell upon them, and they were encircled by fire; angels administered to them and Jesus came and stood in their midst.

*References:* 1 Ne. 11:35, 36; 12:7-10; 14:20, 24, 25, 27; 3 Ne. 12:1; 13:25; 15:11; 19:4-36; 20:1-6; 26:17-21.

In addition to the disciples, who also were called elders, there were priests and teachers. These were ordained by the Twelve by the power of the Holy Ghost.

*References:* Moroni 3:1-4; 6:1.

*The Priesthood.* The officers of the church in all ages and dispensations are the bearers of the Priesthood and, as such, the servants of the Lord and his people.

“Some people ask, ‘What is Priesthood?’ I answer, ‘It is the legitimate rule of God, whether in the heavens or on the earth; and it is the only legitimate power that has a right to rule upon the earth; and when the will of God is done on earth as it is in the heavens, no other power will bear rule.’” (John Taylor, *Jour. of Dis.*, Vol. 5, p. 187.)

*Two Churches.* According to the Book of Mormon, there are two, and only two, churches, the

church of the Lamb of God, and the church of the devil.

If I understand the solemn truth, here revealed, correctly, it refers more particularly to the two kingdoms, the kingdom of God (also called the kingdom of Christ), and the kingdom of the adversary. This view seems to be justified by the fact that the church is sometimes referred to as the "kingdom." (1 Ne. 22:22-26.) These two kingdoms are both upon the earth among the children of men. Each has its own form of government, diametrically contrary to that of the other. The government of the kingdom of God is founded on the celestial principles of righteousness, common consent and equality. The government of the adversary is founded on principles of iniquity, compulsion and despotism. These two kinds of government originated in the spiritual world before the foundations of the earth were laid; they came to the earth with the conflict between the Son of God and Lucifer. They are the only two kinds of government that exist, or can exist.

*References:* Kingdom of God: 1 Ne. 14:10; Alma 5:50; 7:9; 3 Ne. 3:10, 20; Jac. 1:6; Alma 34:36; Kingdom of the Devil: 1 Ne. 14:3; 22:22; Alma 5:25, 39; Ether 8:24, 25.

*Sacred Institutions.* The church, according to the Book of Mormon, has the sacred institutions, or ordinances,<sup>8</sup> with which readers of the New Testament are familiar. These ordinances are especially baptism, the laying on of hands, the breaking of the bread, prayer, and the "fellowship." (Acts 2:41-47.)

---

<sup>8</sup>I use the term ordinances in the same sense that Paul uses it (Heb. 9:1), viz., as divine requirements in addition to the demands of the moral law, which are "commandments."

*Baptism.* Lehi spoke to his sons of the baptism of John the Baptist, of whom the Old Testament prophets had prophesied, and explained to them that the promised Messiah would be baptized by him, at Bethabara, a place, the location of which, no doubt, was known to Lehi, although it is unknown now. Faith and repentance are the first necessary conditions of baptism; without these the ceremony would be null and void. Repentance and baptism are the "gate" to the straight and narrow path. By baptism the believer takes upon him the name of Christ and makes a covenant that he will keep his commandments and serve him. Baptism must be performed by divine authority and in the name of Jesus Christ. The manner in which baptism is to be performed is expressly stated by our Savior: "Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye immerse them in water, and come forth again out of the water."

This decides for ever the question of the mode of baptism. There is only one mode—immersion, by one having the authority from God; no other form is Christian baptism.

It follows from this that baptism of infants is not part of the ordinance instituted by Christ. Little children are "without the law;" they are "alive in Christ" through the power of his redemption, and

they cannot repent; to baptize them is, therefore, "mockery."

The following records of baptisms should be read carefully: By Alma in the Waters of Mormon. (Mos. 18:7-17.) Alma in the land of Melek. (Alma 8:3-6.) Baptism of Zeezrom (Alma 15:1-14) in the land of Sidom. Baptism of 8,000 Lamanites in Zarahemla (Hel. 5:17-19) by Nephi, the son of Helaman, and his brother Lehi. The baptism by Nephi, the disciple of Christ. (3 Ne. 19:10-13.)

*References:* 1 Ne. 10:9, 10; 2 Ne. 31:5; 9:22-24; 31:13, 14, 17, 18; Moroni 8:25, 26; Moroni 6:3, 4; Mos. 18:17; 3 Ne. 1:23; 11:22-28; Moroni 8:8-26.

*Baptism of Fire and of the Holy Ghost.* Intimately connected with baptism in water is baptism in that sacred "fire," which gives spiritual power and light, and which is called the Holy Ghost, or, if the other term is preferred, the Holy Spirit. It is the promise of the Son to whomsoever is baptized in his name, after true repentance, that the Father will give to him the Holy Ghost, as it was given to the Son. It is through this Spirit that the Father bears record, or testifies, of his beloved Son; and, on the other hand, the Holy Ghost, by the same Spirit, bears record of the Father and the Son. The promise of the Lord is, that after the believer has been baptized in water, he himself will administer the baptism with "fire and with the Holy Ghost." But the means by which he imparts his Spirit, with all the power and authority that it implies, is the laying on of hands, for so he instructed his disciples, at the time of his first appearance (Moroni 2:2.)

*References:* 2 Ne. 31:8, 12, 13; 3 Ne. 11:35, 36; 12:1; 19:11-14; 26:17, 18; 3 Ne. 18:37; Moroni 2:1-3; 3:1-4.

It is necessary to have clearly before our minds the difference between the Holy Ghost as a divine person, one with the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost or Spirit, which is the medium of communication between God and his creation, his children, as previously explained. The Prophet Joseph says: "There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the gospel; but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign, or ordinance, upon him, the Holy Ghost, which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him." (*Hist. of the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 555.)

The Holy Ghost opened personally, as it were, the door of the gospel to the gentile world, by pouring out upon those in the house of Cornelius a portion of the power and influence which enabled them to accept truth, speak with tongues, and magnify God. But the full measure of this divine gift came after baptism and the laying on of hands; otherwise, baptism in water would have been superfluous, as many in our day regard it. Until Cornelius observed the ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit in the name of the Lord.

Dr. Talmage makes this distinction between the

Holy Ghost as a person and a divine element: "The term Holy Ghost and its common synonyms, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, or simply Spirit, Comforter, and Spirit of Truth occur in the Scriptures with plainly different meanings, referring in some cases to the person of God, the Holy Ghost, and in other instances to the power or authority of this great Being."

Orson Pratt: "When I speak of the Holy Spirit, I speak of it as being a substance that is precisely the same in its attributes as those of the Father and Son. I speak of it as being a substance that is diffused throughout space, the same as oxygen is in pure water or air. \* \* \* This light, recollect, is so universally diffused, that it giveth light to all things. This is the same light that governs all things, and it is called 'The Power of God.'"

In the Book of Mormon the distinction as we have seen, is made between the Holy Ghost, the person, and "Fire and the Holy Ghost," the divine element or essence. This is a significant distinction.

Human language is but imperfect, and it is doubtful whether there is a word fully expressive of the true nature of this divine person and the medium through which God operates. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the divine element is called "the light which now shineth." (Sec. 88:11-33.) Orson Pratt calls it a "substance." We may, with Dr. Talmage, refer to it as a "power," or an influence, or couple it with the term "fire." And it is all that. But it is more. It is "Holy Spirit,"—a substance, an influence, a power, a light, a fire that proceeds

from the Father and the Son and permeates everything. It is the Glory of God, the manifestation of the divine presence; the fire and smoke, which made Sinai tremble; the glory which rested on the mercy seat in the tabernacle and the temple; the wind which filled the house on the day of Pentecost. It is divine intelligence, since "the glory of God is intelligence." It is the force before which mountains flee and worlds perish, for "the presence of the Lord shall be as the melting fire that burneth, and as the fire which causeth the waters to boil." (Doc. and Cov. 133:41.)

*The Breaking of the Bread.* This ordinance, which is also called the Sacrament, was instituted by our Lord himself, during his appearance in the land of Bountiful, for the spiritual benefit of those who believed in him and had been baptized in his name in this part of the world. The broken bread in this ordinance was to be eaten in remembrance of the body of Jesus, as a testimony to the Father that his Son is remembered. The cup was, similarly, partaken of in remembrance of the blood of our Savior, which was shed for us, and a testimony to the Father that we are willing to keep the commandments which the Father has commissioned his Son to give us.

On one occasion our Lord provided bread and wine miraculously and explained the great truth that, "He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled." From which remarkable expression it is clear, that the eating of the material bread and the drinking of the

material wine is the visible representation of the inward process by which the believer on Jesus partakes of the fruits of his atoning sacrifice of himself. The participants in this sacred meal, we read, "were filled with the Spirit;" that was the essence of which the bread and cup were the emblems; "and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus, whom they both saw and heard."

It is necessary, then, that no unworthy should partake of these sacred emblems. "For whosoever eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul."

The Church made it a point to meet often to partake of the bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

*References:* 3 Ne. 18:5-12, 14; 20:1-9; 26:13; 3 Ne. 18:28; Mormon 9:29; Moroni 6:6.

*The following account of The Institution of the Sacrament by our Lord in Jerusalem may be of interest to the student of the Book of Mormon.*

In the New Testament there are at least five texts directly bearing on the Lord's Supper. They are:

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:26-28.)

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them,

This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.” (Mark 14:22-24.)

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:19, 20.)

“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (I Cor. 10:15-17.)

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” (I Cor. 11:23-39.)

The ordinance was instituted on the occasion of the last celebration of the Passover, by our Lord and his disciples. It may be necessary to recall the Jewish method of observing this commemorative and typical ceremony at that time.

It was customary for the males of the family to meet in the evening of the appointed day to partake of that sacred meal. After having washed their hands and feet, they placed themselves at the table,

reclining on couches. In earlier days the passover was eaten by the participants standing, as if they were about to begin a journey (Ex. 12:11), but later the reclining position was chosen, because the people had entered the land of rest. There was, however, no divine authority for this change.

A cup containing wine, well diluted with water, over which this blessing was pronounced, "Blessed be he that created the fruit of the vine," was first passed round to each guest. The roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, as prescribed in the law, and other kinds of food were then placed on the table. He who presided distributed pieces of the lamb and the bread. All the meat had to be eaten.

After this first course they again washed their feet. They were then ready for the second course. This consisted of bitter herbs, with a kind of sauce made of bruised palm branches, berries and vinegar. This sauce was called *haroseth*. It represented the bitter experiences of the Israelites in Egypt. After this course the cup of wine was passed for the second time. Then the head of the family, who presided, divided a cake of bread into two parts. One he covered with a napkin; the other he distributed, saying, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the King of the whole world, in the eating of unleavened bread." When this part of the bread was eaten, he took the part that had been reserved and broke it into as many pieces as there were persons present. At this time someone of the company asked for an explanation of this service, and the head of the family replied, "This is the bread of affliction, which our

fathers ate in the land of affliction. Let him that is hungry come and eat the passover; let him that hath need come and eat the passover; for this passover is our savior and our refuge." Or, he expounded Deut. 26:5-9:

"And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders; and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey."

Then he took the cup again, tasted it, and presented it to each, saying, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, King of the world, who hast created the fruit of the vine." This third cup was known as "the cup of blessing." (Ps. 116:13; I Cor. 10:16.)

Before the company separated, the cup was passed round once more, and the great Hallel, or Hallelujah (Psalms 113-118), was sung.

Hale and other Biblical scholars consider that the institution of the sacrament was as follows:

When the roasted lamb and other dishes had been placed on the table, our Lord and the Twelve, took their appointed places, whereupon he remarked that he had earnestly desired to eat this passover before his departure (Luke 22:15.) Then he passed the

cup the first time, having pronounced the usual blessing. The lamb was eaten next. This course finished, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and explained the meaning of that sacred ordinance, and warned them against vain ambition. He also told them they were not all clean (John 13:11), alluding to Judas, and spoke of the kingdom which he had appointed to them. (Luke 22:28-38.)

After the washing of feet and this discourse, they took their places at the table again, for the second course, and our Lord said, with unmistakable plainness, that one of those present should betray him. This caused consternation, and all the disciples, including Judas, asked, "Is it I?" To Judas he said, "It is" (Matt. 26:25), but this answer escaped the rest of the Twelve. Peter then beckoned to John, who had the place immediately in front of the Lord, to ask him who was meant. He did so, and the Master replied, that it was he to whom he should give a sop, whereupon he dipped a piece of bread in the *haroseth*, or sauce, and gave it to Judas. John says, "And after the sop Satan entered into him," and Jesus said, "That thou doest, do quickly." (John 13:27.) Judas now left the room.

The Master then took the bread which had been put away in a napkin, blessed it, brake it, and gave the disciples. He likewise took the cup of blessing, and passed it, after having given thanks. When all had partaken thereof, he explained, perhaps in answer to the usual question, What does this mean? the symbolical meaning which, from now on, should be attached to the eating of the broken bread and

drinking of the consecrated cup. Hitherto that broken bread had been, or represented, "the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in the land of affliction;" henceforth it was to be the symbol of his body, as he said, "This is my body, which is broken for you." Up to this time the cup of blessing had been a reminder of the goodness and mercy of God, who, in accordance with his covenant of old, had brought his people to the promised land; now it was to be a symbol of a new covenant: "This cup is the new testament in my blood." And thus our Lord indicated the completion of the old dispensation and the beginning of a new.

After this ordinance had been instituted, Jesus delivered the affectionate and deeply fascinating discourse, recorded by John (13:31, to 16:33), and offered the prayer (John 17) which has been called the *Prayer of the High Priest*, in which he asks for himself: that he may be glorified and thereby glorify his Father; for his disciples: that they may be kept from falling and become one, as the Father and the Son are one; for the converts in all ages: that "the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." After this prayer they sang the great Hallelujah (Matt. 26:30), and then the Master took his disciples over the brook Cedron to the slope of the Mount of Olives, where they entered a grove called Gethsemane.

At first the followers of our Lord observed the ordinance daily; they met every day in the courts of the Temple, where they listened to the teachings

of the Twelve, and then they partook of the Lord's supper and prayed in the private houses. (Acts 2: 41-47.) But soon the sacrament was distributed only on the first day of the week, when the disciples held their regular meetings (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2.) This day was called the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), and it was observed by his followers as such.

*Love Feasts.* In the earliest days of the primitive church, a so-called love-feast, *agape*, was held in connection with the celebration of the sacrament, analogous to the passover. To these meals all the members were invited, and the poor were provided for by those who had means. At these gatherings contributions of money were also made and placed in the hands of the presiding elder, or bishop, for the maintenance of widows and orphans, for the care of the sick, and for such aid of prisoners and strangers as might be required and could be rendered. Money was also freely spent on the purchase of the freedom of slaves. Tertullian says of these love-feasts:

"However much it may cost us, it is real gain to incur such expense in the cause of piety: for we aid the poor by this refreshment; we do not sit down to it till we have first tasted of prayer to God; we eat to satisfy our hunger; we drink no more than befits the temperate; we feast as those who recollect that they are to spend the night in devotion; we converse as those who know that the Lord is an ear-witness. After water for washing hands, and lights have been brought in, every one is required to sing something to the praise of God, either from the Scriptures or from his own thoughts: by this means, if any one has indulged in excess, he is detected. The feast is closed with prayer."

From I Cor. 11:21, II Peter 2:13, and Jude 12,

it appears that the love-feasts very early became occasions of revelry. The rich consumed their own food and let the poor go away hungry. Some of them drank to excess, and, as a consequence, indulged in sensuality. The Roman authorities suspected that these love-feasts were held for political purposes. About the middle of the second century they were, for these reasons, separated from the sacrament.

*The Universality of the Church.* Nephi saw the Saints "scattered upon all the face of the earth," "armed with righteousness and the power of God."

*References:* 1 Ne. 14:14; 2 Ne. 30:8-18.

"Scattered everywhere is this people, building churches, as has been pointed out, in the East, in the West, and on the islands of the sea. It means permanency for the Saints. There will be branches of the Church throughout the world. In 1906 I had the pleasure of visiting the Old Country, in company with our beloved President Joseph F. Smith. In the city of Bern, in Switzerland, we held a Priesthood meeting one night, at which the power of God was richly and truly manifest. President Serge F. Ballif was there and is a witness to what I say. Joseph F. Smith said: 'Not only will we have churches here, but in this land of Europe we will have temples of the Lord built here and there, all over the land.' That was his prediction. I believe it. I believe in this vision of Nephi; that he saw our people scattered in small communities all over the face of the earth. The Church of God is permanent." (President Charles W. Nibley, Conference Sermon, Oct. 5, 1924.)

*Prayer.* Prayer is one of the great institutions of the Church of Christ, as is clear from the Acts, 1:42, where we read that the converts "continued steadfastly" in prayers, as well as in the breaking of

bread. The same is said of the church on this continent (Moroni 6:5.)

In the Book of Mormon we have many remarkable instances of prayer and answers to prayer.

*Lehi*, prayed, and in answer to his supplications, he had a glorious vision of the Almighty, and was commanded in a dream to depart from Jerusalem. And thus began the journey that was the beginning of a new era in American history, in prayer. See also the last words of *Lehi*.

*References:* 1 Ne. 1:6; 2:1-3; 8:8, 9; 2 Ne. 4:3-12.

*Nephi* cried unto the Lord, when his brothers Laman and Lemuel were rebellious and the Lord answered him and gave him instructions and promises.

1 Ne. 2:16-24; 7:17-20.

He prayed, when the storms raged and his brothers sought his life. See his prayer after the death of his father *Lehi*.

1 Ne. 18:21-23; 2 Ne. 4:20-35.

God hears the prayers of the faithful.

2 Ne. 6:11; 26:15; 33:4; Alma 10:22, 23.

*Jacob*. The prayer of *Jacob* and the answer.

*Jacob* 7:20-23.

*Enos'* prayer answered.

*Enos* 11, 12.

*Soldiers Pray*. God hears and answers prayer on the day of conflict.

*Mos.* 9:16-19; *Alma* 2:28; 58:10.

*Alma.* His prayers and answer thereto.

Mos. 23:10; 27:14; Alma 5:46; 8:10.

*Spirit of prophecy* and revelation through prayer.

Alma 17:3; 26:22.

*Ammon* prays.

Alma 19:14.

*Moroni* prayed when he had raised the standard of liberty. He dedicated this land by prayer.

Alma 46:11-17.

*Community Prayer.* The followers of our Lord are instructed to pray in their public meetings of worship as well as in private.

Alma 6:6; 28:6; 30:2; 31:10; 45:1; Hel. 3:55; 3 Ne. 27:1; Moroni 6:5.

*Pray Always.* The injunction is: "Cry unto him when you are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness, yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you."

Alma 34:17-27.

*Zenos on prayer.*

Alma 33:3-11.

*How Not to Pray.* The people of God are warned not to use stereotyped prayers; they must let the Spirit of the Lord dictate their petitions. The Zoramites are held up as a warning.

Alma 31:12-18; 38:13.

*The Lord's Prayer.* Our Lord taught the people to whom he appeared in Bountiful the same prayer which he had given his disciples in Palestine as a pattern.

3 Ne. 13:9-13.

Jesus himself prayed, humbly bowing himself down to the earth, although, or perhaps just because, his disciples had in their prayers acknowledged him to be their Lord and God.

3 Ne. 19:18-36.

From the New Testament we learn that Jesus our Lord, while on his earthly mission, prayed continually. He prayed in order to obtain power to do his mighty works. He prayed when his day's work was ended. He prayed when the waves of sorrow and anguish passed over his soul. He commenced his work by fasting and praying for forty days, and he ended his work on earth by commending his spirit to his heavenly Father's care.

Here, in the Book of Mormon, we learn that he also prayed as a resurrected being, although he had conquered death and the grave, and been given all power, in heaven and in earth. (Matt. 28:18.)

Let us remember that the institutions of the Church, and the church itself, are patterned after the order that obtains in the celestial realms of God. They are given us in order that we may have the spiritual training needed for our lives in the presence of God hereafter. That is the great object for which we have been given membership in the Church, and the holy Priesthood. It is by the faithful performance of the duties and obligations connected with these institutions that we prepare ourselves for the activity hereafter, which is eternal progress.

*In the Name of Jesus.* Our prayers, in order to be acceptable, must be offered up in the name of Jesus; that is to say, what we desire we must ask for by his authority and because of his merit, as our Father, the head of the human family in all that pertains to salvation; the "last Adam." (1 Cor. 15:45.)

3 Ne. 19:6, 7; Moroni 7:26.

*Prayer and Thanksgiving.* The followers of our Lord need hardly be reminded that it is their privilege and natural duty to render thanks to the Lord for all his mercies and blessings, whenever they pray. Thanksgiving and prayer should go hand in hand. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." (Psalms 103:1, 2.) That is the only frame of mind in which to approach the Lord in prayer.

Alma 19:14; 26:37; Hel. 13:22; 3 Ne. 10:10; Moroni 7:6-10.

## CONCERNING THE FELLOWSHIP

This is an important institution of the Church of Christ, which will be established when the Lord finds the conditions favorable. It is a form of society, too perfect for most of us, but one for which we are being educated and trained, slowly but surely. In the Book of Mormon we read: "And it came to pass that the disciples whom Jesus had chosen began from that time forth to baptize and to teach as many as did come unto them; and as many as were baptized in the name of Jesus were filled with the Holy Ghost. And many of them saw and heard unspeakable things, which are not lawful to be written. And they taught, and did minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another. And it came to pass that they did do all things even as Jesus had commanded them." (3 Ne. 27:17-20.)

The united order was, as we see here, one of the fruits of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and it was in accordance with the commandments of our Lord.

For the full meaning of the word "fellowship" see chapter Eleven.

For an explanation of and quotations on the united order see *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, pp. 290, 322, 417, 492, 724, 826.

## A CLOSING WORD

*The Book of Mormon Needed.* A radical change has come to the religious world during the last century, affecting both doctrine and practice. The

idea of the authority of God, as set forth by revelation, has been laid aside as obsolete. The Bible, as an infallible source of truth, has been discarded, and thereby the entire foundation of the Reformation has been blown up, as by dynamite. The defenders of the Bible were, in their timidity, first driven to the position that the Bible was unreliable when dealing with subjects belonging to geology, biology, ethnology, astronomy, and history, but infallible on matters relating to ethics and religion. But criticism did not confine itself to that which pertains to the sciences. It soon attacked the moral precepts of the Bible as impossible, or impractical. Then the defenders retreated and suggested that the Bible is not Christianity, and that whatever may be said against the Bible, does not concern Christianity. And this Christianity, without revelation and divine authority, without the word of God as the final arbiter between truth and error, is now being lauded to the skies by many modern theologians, and their followers who do not know what their leaders are talking about.

In the meantime, waves of atheism, anarchy and crime are sweeping Christian countries. Homes are being broken up by desertions and divorces, and children, left without the support of a father's and mother's combined care, are falling by the wayside in ever growing numbers. In our own country there are now one divorce for every seven marriages, and 90 per cent of delinquent children are from such destroyed homes. The Sabbath of the Lord is being desecrated, and the Protestant churches are losing members at the rate of thousands annually in this

country. Crimes of violence and dishonesty are increasing, until, if the present condition continues, neither life nor property will be safe.

But far above the din of modern Babel, the effulgence of celestial glory broke through the clouds and illuminated the earth, and in the light a heavenly messenger appeared who proclaimed the everlasting gospel, which neither the criticism nor the skepticism nor the atheism of apostate ages can touch, because the Lord has had it in safe keeping specially for this age. Now, it is needed for the salvation of man, just as the New Testament was needed at the close of the Mosaic dispensation. And this glorious, everlasting gospel was ushered in by the angel who, in pursuance of his divine commission, gave the Prophet Joseph Smith charge of the venerable record, for publication to the world. And the substance of this message is: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water."

(END)