

WHAT THE MORMONS THINK OF CHRIST

1963

* * *

CONFUSION ABOUT CHRIST

Christ is acclaimed by Christians everywhere as the Founder of their faith and the greatest man who ever lived. But there the unity of belief concerning him and his mission ceases.

Violent variance of opinion is found concerning every part of his ministry and mission, and concerning every essential part of the faith he founded. Salvation itself is at stake in the acceptance or rejection of the various basic doctrines about Christ and his mission, doctrines which often are espoused openly by one body of religionists but shunned and rejected by another.

Is Christ really the Son of God in the same Literal sense in which we are the sons of mortal parents? Or is he, as so many seem to believe, only a man, though as all admit, the greatest man and the chief moral teacher of the ages? Did he himself claim to be the Son of God or was such idea merely an afterthought of his mortal associates and followers?

Does salvation really come in and through him and his atoning sacrifice? What is salvation by grace? From what, if anything, did he redeem men? Is there actually cleansing power in his blood? And, if so, for whom?

Is it Christ or the Father who is the Creator of all things? Was Christ known to the prophets before the meridian of time?

In what way does he mediate and intercede for us? How is he our Advocate? What of his Messiahship? Does the manner in which ordinances are performed have any significance in symbolizing eternal truths about our Lord? In what way is he the Light of the World?

Is there virtue in his name? Do we worship him, or only the Father in his name? To whom has he appeared, both before and after his ministry in the flesh? What is his relationship to the prophets and apostles who have testified of him? And how can he be known and accepted amid the doubt and confusion of this modern world?

A NEW WITNESS FOR CHRIST

Some people even in this day of education and enlightenment profess to believe that the Mormons (members of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*) do not believe in Christ, but rather have some mystical theology based on a belief in Joseph Smith, or Brigham Young, or Mormon. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (known informally by the nickname *Mormons*) believe the *Bible*. Indeed, so literally and completely do their beliefs and practices conform to the teachings of the Bible that it is not uncommon to hear informed persons say: “If all men believed the *Bible*, all would be *Mormons*.” *Bible* doctrine is *Mormon* doctrine, and *Mormon* doctrine is *Bible* doctrine. They are one and the same.

But as is well known, the *Bible* does not contain all the doctrines and truths taught by the prophets and apostles, nor have the teachings preserved in it come down to us in an absolutely perfect form. There are and have been many translations and versions of the Bible, each of which varies from the others.

Sometimes, also, it has been extremely difficult, when, for instance, passages have been translated from Greek, to Latin, to English, to preserve the exact thought expressed by a speaker who used the idiom and vernacular of Aramaic. Yet, with it all, the *Bible* as now translated is one of the marvels of the ages, and is revered and devoutly believed by the Latter-day Saints.

Mormons fortunately, however, are not forced to rely solely on the testimony of prophets and apostles of Old and New Testament times and lands. They have latter-day revelation, given through prophets of modern times, and also an inspired record of God’s dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the American continent.

Joseph Smith was the prophet who, under the direction of Christ, translated and brought forth in modern times the *Book of Mormon*. This book is a record of God’s dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel and who anciently inhabited the American continent. Their prophets had the same spirit of testimony and revelation enjoyed by the old world representatives of the Lord. They spoke of Christ, prophesied of his coming, taught his doctrines, had his gospel, and administered the ordinances of salvation with his authority.

All of these things are spoken of in the *Book of Mormon*, and, accordingly, that volume is *a new witness of Christ*. It is a volume of scripture that supplements and supports but does not supplant the *Bible*. They go hand in hand in bearing testimony of the divinity of Christ and in teaching his doctrines, but the *Book of Mormon* has the advantage of plainness and simplicity in style. Indeed, there never were plainer or more powerful prophecies foretelling the coming and mission of Christ than those preserved for us in the

Book of Mormon. And these came to the modern world through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Both the *Bible* and the *Book of Mormon* bear the same testimony. Both are records of God's dealings with ancient peoples who had the fulness of the gospel, who knew of Christ and his laws, and who had a sure hope of eternal salvation in the kingdom of the Father. They are in perfect agreement with each other and when taken together give a plain and clear picture of Christ and of the laws of salvation.

It will now be our purpose to inquire, both, "What do the Mormons think of Christ," and "What is the testimony and knowledge of Christ that must be gained by all men, if they are to receive the greatest of all the gifts of God, that of eternal life." The sincere investigator will want to know what the *Bible*, the *Book of Mormon*, and latter-day revelation have to contribute to these vital propositions.

In our research, then, we will turn first to the *Bible*—the book of books—and see what knowledge about Christ is there recorded under various important headings. Then we shall want to know how this is confirmed, amplified, and approved by the *Book of Mormon*, and occasionally by other latter-day revelations. From it all we will come to a true knowledge about Christ which, when confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the heart of each individual truth seeker, will lead such person to eternal life.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST

A merciful God—that holy being whose work and glory are to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man—has not left his children in darkness as to the path they should follow and the things they should do to gain salvation.

Rather, he has decreed that salvation comes in and through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and he has sent his prophets, from age to age, to bear record of Christ and to teach the truths of the plan of salvation.

Those who love the Lord and desire salvation will want to learn of Christ and his mission, in all ages, and from all available sources, so that they may know how to anchor themselves to this Eternal Rock of Ages and gain for themselves a hope of eternal life. And so, let us "*search the scriptures,*" for as our Lord himself said, "*They are they which testify, of me.*" (John 5:39; emphasis added.)

First, then, from the words he spoke to Nicodemus, we learn:

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even *the Son of man* which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the

Son of man be lifted up:

That *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:13-18; emphasis added.)

Peter, in speaking to those who had “killed the Prince of life” proclaimed Christ as “The stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” (Acts 4:11-12; emphasis added.)

From these scriptures, none can question that the *Bible* teaches that salvation is in Christ. Now, let us see some of the coordinate testimony found in the *Book of Mormon*.

An angel, appearing to a righteous king named Benjamin, some 124 years before the Christian Era, bore this testimony:

And moreover, I say unto you, that *there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.*

For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls except they humble themselves and become as little children, and *believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.* (Mosiah 3:17-18; emphasis added.)

At an earlier date, nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ in the flesh, Lehi taught:

Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

Behold he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

Wherefore, *how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.* (2 Nephi 2:6-8; emphasis added.)

The whole heart of the Nephite Saints was centered in Christ and the salvation which he wrought and which he has offered to men on conditions of obedience. Jacob taught, for instance: *“My soul delighteth in proving unto my people that save Christ should come all men must perish.”* (2 Nephi 11:6; emphasis added.)

Similarly, Nephi wrote:

. . . There is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ, of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved.

We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins. (2 Nephi 25:20, 26; emphasis added.)

Salvation is in Christ today, as it was anciently, and as it ever will be. And today, as anciently and always, the testimony of Christ as revealed through his prophets is being carried to the world by his legal representatives.

These modern witnesses know and testify, as did the prophets of old for their respective days, that Christ is the Son of God; that he has worked out the infinite and eternal atonement; that he has given the plan of salvation with all its saving powers and graces again to men on earth; and that except men come to these legal administrators and learn of Christ and his laws as newly revealed on earth, they cannot be saved in his everlasting kingdom hereafter.

Since Christ is the center of all things pertaining to our salvation, and since our hope of eternal life is centered in him (or is vain), it is of surpassing import that we make some further inquiries relative to him, and his position in the eternal plan of salvation, inquiries concerning some things that are but dimly known and little understood in the world.

THE SON OF GOD

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

Saying, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* They say unto him, The son of David.

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord [i.e. Elohim, the Father] said unto my Lord [i.e. Jehovah, the Son], Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. (Matthew 22:41-46; emphasis added.)

In this conversation our Lord boldly directed the Pharisees to consider the very heart and core of Christianity. Is he really the Son of God, as we are the sons of mortal fathers? Or was he just another religious teacher, of whom there were many among the Jews in that day? Or, more than that, was he the greatest moral and spiritual teacher of all ages, though not the literal, personal offspring in the flesh of that exalted, personal being who is God our Father?

The Pharisees were completely confounded and could not reply. They knew he was to be a descendant of David (a requirement fulfilled through Mary, his mother), but that he was also David's Lord, the God of Israel the Jehovah of old, born into the world as the Son of the Father, they did not know.

Nor was their state of blind rejection of revealed truth of a different variety than that found among equally sincere religious people today. Many reliable surveys have been made among present day ministers and laymen alike, inquiring relative to a belief in Christ as the literal Son of God. Few there are who have knowledge that he is such, literally, personally, actually, as other men are the sons of mortal parents.

Of course, to accept him as the Son of God, one must first believe in his Father as God and must believe that the Father is a personal being in whose image man is created—knowledge that is not widely had among Christians. When God is believed to be impersonal, uncreated, incorporeal, incomprehensible, unknown, unknowable, a mystical three-in-one spirit that fills immensity, it is not possible to accept him as the literal Father of our Lord.

Almost universally, however, Christ is accepted as the greatest moral teacher who ever lived, a belief that is wholly inconsistent with reality unless he was also the Son of God. How could he be the greatest moral teacher, the greatest exponent of truth, the greatest spiritual leader, if he was also a liar, a base fraud, a deceiver?

He said that he was the Son of God, using language and figures that were plain to his hearers. Now, if his declarations were untrue and deceitful how could he be the greatest moral teacher and yet be dealing in lies? Either Christ was the Son of God and all that he and his witnesses claimed him to be, or we might more profitably forget Christianity and live after the manner of the world.

Let us note a few of the testimonies he left of himself. As John said the scriptural records are written “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31.)

At Jacob’s well Jesus taught a Samaritan woman that she must worship the Father in spirit and in truth. She replied: “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.” To this Jesus said: “I that speak unto thee am he.” (John 4:25-26; emphasis added.)

In bearing witness of his divine Sonship, on another occasion, he said:

I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

. . . *If ye believe not that I am he [i.e. Christ], ye shall die in your sins.*

. . . When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as *my Father hath taught me*. I speak these things.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him. (John 8:18, 24, 28-29; emphasis added.)

After Jesus had opened the eyes of a man born blind, and after this man who now saw had been castigated unmercifully by the Jews, Jesus sought him out and said: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee*. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” (John 9:35-38; emphasis added.)

When Jesus was taken before Caiaphas, the high priest, that unworthy one said:

. . . I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* (Matthew 26:63-64; emphasis added.)

If untrue, this plain claim of divine Sonship would have been awful blasphemy, as the Jews well know; and so the record says:

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, *He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.*

What think ye? They answered and said. He is guilty of death.

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Saying, *Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?* (Matthew 26:65-68; emphasis added.)

The whole Jewish nation knew that Christ had announced himself as the Son of God. Before Pilate they charged him with “perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said, *Thou sayest it.*” (Luke 23:2-3; emphasis added.)

On the cross his enemies dared him to prove the claim of Sonship by saying: “*If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross . . . If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*” (Matthew 27:40, 42-43; emphasis added.)

Not only were there these many plain declarations of his divinity, but there were many couched in the symbolical language of the Jews which meant to them the same thing as though he had in those instances also spoken plainly. “*I am the door of the sheep . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture . . .*

“*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine.*

“*As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*”

Then there was a division among the Jews, and some said to him: “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, *I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.* But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.” Then he said unto them plainly: “*I am the Son of God.*” (John 10:7, 9-11, 14-15, 17-18, 24-26, 36; emphasis added.)

His great sermon on the bread of life bore similar testimony. The declaration, “*I am the bread of life,*” meant to his hearers that he was the Son of God, and was so understood, for when the sermon was ended Simon Peter said: “*Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (John 6:48, 68-69; emphasis added.)

Many times in our day the voice of Christ has been heard to say such things as: “*Behold. I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the same that came unto mine own, and mine own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.*” (D&C 6:21; emphasis added.)

That Christ is the Son of God is amply demonstrated by his own testimony, but the works that he wrought, and by the testimony of all the prophets of all the ages. And this testimony is borne now, as always, that believing men “might have life through his name.” (John 20:31.)

If he were not the Son of God, there would be no salvation or eternal life. If he had not been born into the world as the Son of Mary (inheriting from her mortality and the power to lay down his life), and as the Son of God (inheriting from him the power of immortality so that he could take up his life again), then he could not have worked out the infinite and eternal atonement, and our faith would be in vain.

But he is the Son of God, and he still calls: “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” (Matthew 11:28-29; emphasis added.)

THE MESSIAH

The nature of the prophetic calling is to bear testimony of Christ. A prophet is one who has the supreme knowledge, engraven in his soul by revelation, that Jesus is the Christ, “For the testimony of Jesus is”—by definition—“the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10.)

When a man gains personal revelation as to the divinity, mission, and works of Christ, he has attained the testimony of Jesus, and it is the possession of this gift which constitutes him a prophet. Hence, Peter was able to say concerning Christ: “To him give all the prophets witness” (Acts 10:43), and if they did not, they would not be prophets, for witnessing of Christ is the very thing which grants them fellowship in that select assemblage.

Accordingly, all of the prophets from Adam to Christ bore record that Christ, the promised Messiah, should come. All of the prophets from the day of his coming to the present moment have borne record, by revelation, that he did come, that the atonement which he wrought is an accomplished fact, and that by adherence to the laws and ordinances of his gospel salvation may be gained now, as it was gained by the faithful saints of old.

We need not dwell at length on the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, for these are well known to the sincere and devout members of every Christian church. They know that Isaiah predicted the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14); foretold his coming as the Prince of

Peace to reign on the throne of David forever (Isaiah 9:6-7); and that in his famous 53rd chapter he wrote in advance the record of Christ's mission, ministry and death.

It is well known that Micah fore-named Bethlehem as the place where he would be born (Micah 5:2); that Zechariah foretold the instance of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9); and that he also foresaw the betrayal by Judas for 30 pieces of silver, and saw that this bloodmoney thereafter was expended for the potter's field. (Zechariah 11:12-13.)

And so we might go on, as Matthew did in recording his gospel account, and recite the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the coming and ministry of our Lord. More profit, however, for our day will be found in noting a few of the less known Messianic prophecies, those found in that volume which is a new witness for Christ in the world, the *Book of Mormon*.

Nearly 600 years before Christ, Nephi foresaw his coming and many of the detailed events of his life. An angel showed him the virgin Mary, and said:

. . . Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look!

And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

And the angel said unto me: *Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!* . . .

And I looked and beheld *the Redeemer of the world*, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove.

And I beheld that he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were gathered together to hear him; and I beheld they cast him out from among them.

And I also beheld twelve others following him . . .

. . . And I beheld the Lamb of God going forth among the children of men. And I beheld multitudes of people who were sick, and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases, and with devils and unclean spirits; and the angel spake and showed all these

things unto me. And they were healed by the power of the Lamb of God; and the devils and the unclean spirits were cast out.

And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me again, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, *the Son of the everlasting God* was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

And I, Nephi, saw that *he was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.*

And after he was slain I saw the multitudes of the earth, that they were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb; for thus were the twelve called by the angel of the Lord. (1 Nephi 11:18-21, 27-29, 31-34; emphasis added.)

Later, about the year 124 B.C., these words were spoken by an angel to King Benjamin:

Behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, *the Lord Omnipotent* who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, *shall come down from heaven among the children of men*, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.

And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.

And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary.

And lo, he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name; and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall *scourge him*, and shall *crucify him*.

And he shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold he standeth to judge the world; and behold, all these things are done that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men. (Mosiah 3:5-10; emphasis added.)

What fault can any right thinking Christian find with prophecies of this sort? They are typical of the light and truth that is available since the *Book of Mormon* has come forth to bear concurrent testimony with the *Bible* of the holy Messiahship of Christ.

THE CREATOR

Under the direction of the Father, Christ was and is the Creator of this earth and all things that are in it, and also of worlds without number. Strangely, the might and dominion and preeminence of Christ and his creative power is but little known. Yet the apostles of old wrote freely about it.

John said Christ “was in the beginning with God.” To this truth he added, speaking of Christ: “*All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*” (John 1:1-3; emphasis added.)

Paul amplified this by writing that by Christ “*were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” (Colossians 1:16-17; emphasis added.)

That all things includes this and other worlds is evident from this *Bible* passage: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds.*” (Hebrews 1:1-2; emphasis added.)

In many ages the Lord has given similar knowledge to his servants. When “Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face,” he was told, “*And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.*” (Moses 1:31, 33; emphasis added.)

Abraham, in vision, saw God and his noble and great spirit children. He saw that among these spirits was Christ, the Firstborn, and that he “*was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will rake these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell.*” (Abraham 3:24; emphasis added.)

By revelation to us the Lord has said:

Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made;

The same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes;

I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me.
(D&C 38:1-3; emphasis added.)

To Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, while those two were wrapped in visions like unto Abraham's, a voice from God bore record that by Christ, "and through him, and of him, *the worlds are and were created.*" (D&C 76:24; emphasis added.)

MEDIATOR, ADVOCATE, INTERCESSOR

Here again is a doctrine vital to our knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the plan of salvation. This *Bible* doctrine is but little known and dimly understood, if at all, in the churches of the world.

Christ is our Mediator. He is our Advocate, our Intercessor. He stands as the only Mediator between God and man, seeks to turn us from our wayward state and reconcile and bring us into agreement with the Father. He pleads our cause in the courts above, intercedes in our behalf, defends us because of our weaknesses, and strives to lead us to perfection so we may be one with him and his Father•

The importance of this doctrine is seen when it is recognized that salvation itself comes because of Christ's intercession for us. "Wherefore he is able," as Paul expressed it, "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" (Hebrews 7:25; emphasis added.)

Paul, also, found in Christ's atonement and intercession answer to his heartfelt cries: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

His conclusion: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And why did he reach this conclusion.'? Because: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us.*" (Romans 8:34-39; emphasis added.) His eternal love for his brethren is established in that he continues to plead their cause sitting enthroned as he now is on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

As far as our scriptural records go there is no more eloquent pleading, no more fervent advocacy, no more heart felt attempt to spend his mediatory powers in our behalf, than is found in his great Intercessory Prayer. To his Father he said of his disciples:

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

. . . Holy Father, *keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me,* that they may be one, as we are.

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil.*

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me. Where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:9, 11, 15, 17, 20-21, 24; emphasis added.)

What more perfect advocacy could one seek than this which comes from “God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For,” as Paul further explains, there is “*one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all.*” (1 Timothy 2:3-6; emphasis added.)

And so John in teaching the law of repentance and forgiveness which is in Christ was able to say: “*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins.*” (1 John 2:1-2; emphasis added.)

As we have seen in other instances (for God’s word is God’s word!), the prophets among *Book of Mormon* peoples bear testimony to the same eternal truths as did the inspired men among the Jews. So Lehi, first of the Nephite prophets, said of the mediation of Christ:

“He is the first-fruits unto God, inasmuch *as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved. And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him.*” (2 Nephi 2:9-10; emphasis added.)

And so Moroni, last of the *Book of Mormon* prophets, a thousand years later, in recording the words of his prophet-father Mormon (for whom the *Book of Mormon* was named), said to the saints of his day:

My beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath sat down on the right hand of God, to claim of the Father his rights of mercy which he hath upon the children of men?

For he hath answered the ends of the law, and he claimeth all those who have faith in him; and they who have faith in him will cleave unto every good thing; wherefore *he*

advocateth the cause of the children of men; and he dwelleth eternally in the heavens.
(Moroni 7:27-28; emphasis added.)

Then it was Abinadi, mighty Book of Mormon prophet, who gave us the inspired meaning of Isaiah's intercessory-Messianic prophecy. Foretelling the mission of our Lord and writing prophetically of future events as though they were an accomplished fact, Isaiah had recorded: "He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12; emphasis added.)

It fell to the *Book of Mormon* prophet, Abinadi, to draw from Isaiah's words this interpretive meaning:

God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; *giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—*

Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy.; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity, and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. (Mosiah 15:8-9; emphasis added.)

By revelation in our day Christ has confirmed these truths. Speaking of those who believe on his name, he said: "*I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.*" (D&C 88:4; emphasis added.)

Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your case before him—

Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life. (D&C 45:3-4; emphasis added.)

In the light of all that God has said on this subject--latter-day revelation confirming the revelations of old—dare we imperil the gaining of our salvation by not accepting Christ as our Mediator, our Advocate, and our Intercessor? And do we not accept him by keeping his commandments?

THE REDEEMER AND SAVIOR

Christ is our Redeemer and our Savior. Except for him there would be no salvation and no redemption, and unless men come unto him and accept him as their Savior, they

cannot have eternal life in his presence. The gospel plan is the way which is ordained whereby men may come to him and find salvation.

An angel told Nephi that “*the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved.*” (1 Nephi 13:40; emphasis added.) It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to accept him as our Redeemer, and, in accordance with the laws he has ordained, come unto him so that we may gain a hope of eternal life.

What is this great plan of redemption which he has ordained? Lehi said: “*Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall.*” (2 Nephi 2:25-26; emphasis added.)

The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, then, is the foundation upon which redemption rests. Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world. The atonement of Christ ransoms us from the effects of both temporal and spiritual death.

Temporal death is a condition that attends mortality. Mortal beings have corruptible bodies, bodies that decay. Spirit and body eventually are separated and we call this the

natural or temporal death. The atonement of Christ ransoms all men from the effects of this temporal death in that all are resurrected, all are brought forth in immortality, and the bodies and the spirits of all men are united again inseparately. The resurrection of Christ brings to pass the resurrection of all men.

To be cast out of the presence of the Lord and to die as to the things of righteousness or of the Spirit is spiritual death. The atonement of Christ ransoms men from the effects of spiritual death in that by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel they can be born again and have spiritual life. They can become alive as to the things of the Spirit, the things of righteousness, and can live again in the presence of God, which life is called eternal life.

Redemption is, thus, both temporal and spiritual. It is temporal for all men in that they are raised in immortality. It is spiritual for those who obey the gospel law in that they are “raised in immortality unto eternal life,” if they believe and obey. “And they that believe not unto eternal damnation; for they cannot be redeemed from their *spiritual fall*, because they repent not.” (D&C 29:43-44; emphasis added.)

The joy of our redemption, thus, comes to us through the fall of Adam and the atonement of Christ. If there had been no Redeemer, no Savior, there would have been no immortality and no eternal life.

SALVATION BY GRACE

Salvation by grace is one of the glorious doctrines of Christ. It is true that confusion and false teachings relative to it are found on every hand, but the same is true with reference to the Godhead and almost every other principle of salvation.

Grace is simply the mercy, the love and the condescension God has for his children, as a result of which he has ordained the plan of salvation so that they may have power to progress and become like him. It is perfectly exemplified in the scripture: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.)

On the same basis Christ “so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God.” (D&C 34:3.)

Since the redemption of Christ ransoms men from the effects of both the temporal fall and the spiritual fall, his grace, necessarily, is manifested in both fields. All men are *saved by grace alone* without any act on their part, meaning that they are resurrected and become immortal because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Thus Jacob was led to exclaim:

“O the wisdom of God his mercy and *grace!* For behold, if the flesh should rise no more,” that is, if Christ had not effected a resurrection, “our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more.” (2 Nephi 9:8; emphasis added.)

In addition to this redemption from death, all men, by the grace of God, have the power to gain eternal life. This is called *salvation by grace coupled with obedience* to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Hence Nephi was led to write: “We labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be *reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.*” (2 Nephi 25:23; emphasis added.)

And thus Jacob was led to explain:

My beloved brethren, *reconcile yourselves to the will of God*, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, *after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.*

Wherefore, may God raise you from death by the power of the resurrection, and also from everlasting death by the power of the atonement, that ye may be received into the eternal kingdom of God, that ye may *praise him through grace divine.* (2 Nephi 10:24-25; emphasis added.)

And finally, we find this perfect summary of the law of grace by Moroni:

Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, *then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.*

And again, if ye *by the grace of God* are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye *sanctified in Christ lay the grace of God*, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye *become holy, without spot.* (Moroni 10:32-33; emphasis added.)

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12; emphasis added.)

“Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.” (3 Nephi 15:9; emphasis added.)

“I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” (3 Nephi 12:48; emphasis added.)

“What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.” (3 Nephi 27:27; emphasis added.)

Christ is the great Exemplar. He set the path, and marked the way. Salvation comes by following him, and by walking in the way he walked. Part of his mortal mission was to set an example for all subsequent generations. He is the Light—the Light of the world.

No better illustration of this is found than in the example he set where the ordinance of baptism is concerned. When John the Baptist deferred, and would have refrained from baptizing him, our Lord said: “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matthew 3:15.)

And Nephi—having seen this glorious event in vision—wrote:

And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be... baptized, yea, even by water!

And he [Christ] said unto the children of men: *Follow thou me.* Wherefore, my beloved brethren, *can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?*

. . . I know that if ye shall *follow the Son with full purpose of heart*, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by' baptism—yea, by *following your Lord and your Savior down into the water*, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; . . . (2 Nephi 31:5, 10, 13; emphasis added.)

How many people in the world today follow the Son, not only where baptism is concerned, but in all walks of life?

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Christians speak often of the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. Much that is believed and taught on this subject, however, is such utter nonsense and so palpably false that to believe it is to lose one's salvation. Many go so far, for instance, as to pretend, at least, to believe that if we confess Christ with our lips and avow that we accept him as our personal Savior, we are thereby saved. His blood, without other act than mere belief, they say, makes us clean.

What is the true doctrine of the blood of Christ? Salvation comes because of the atonement, and the atonement was wrought out through the shedding of the blood of Christ. In Gethsemane when he conditionally took upon himself the sins of the world, he sweat great drops of blood from every pore, and then, finally, upon the cross the shedding of his blood was completed•

So important is it that we have ever in mind the atoning ransom that was paid through the shedding of his blood, that the ordinance of the sacrament was instituted with the eating of the broken bread to be done in remembrance of his broken flesh, and the drinking of the cup in remembrance of his spilt blood.

Hence he said to the Jews: “Whoso eateth my flesh, and *drinketh my blood*, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:54; emphasis added.) And so John beheld the inhabitants of the celestial world giving glory to him, saying: “*Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*” (Revelation 5:9; emphasis added.)

But there are certain conditions attached to the attainment of salvation through his atoning blood. “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light,*” John expressed it, “*we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” (1 John 1:7; emphasis added.)

The angelic ministrant to King Benjamin taught the doctrine in these words: “As in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so *the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins . . . Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent!*” (Mosiah 3:16, 18; emphasis added.)

The resurrected Lord, himself, taught the Nephites: “And no unclean thing can enter into his [the Father’s] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be *those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith*, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.” (3 Nephi 27:19; emphasis added.)

Finally, in our day, he has said plainly: “*My blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.*” (D&C 29:17; emphasis added.)

Salvation in the kingdom of God is available because of the atoning blood of Christ. But it is received only on condition of faith, repentance, baptism, and enduring to the end in keeping the commandments of God.

rites, ordinances, symbolisms

One of the seemingly little known facts about gospel ordinances, and the form and manner in which they are performed, is that the particular mode involved is chosen to bear record of something about Christ.

Not only do the prophets bear witness of him, but the symbolisms and performances, the rites and ordinances of the gospel are done in such a way as to center the minds of the participants upon him.

The multitudinous performances of the Mosaic law were designed to keep the Israelites “in remembrance of God and their duty towards him,” and as Abinadi expressed it, “*All these things were types of things to come.*” (Mosiah 13:30-31; emphasis added.)

Jacob gave expression to a similar thought: “Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ: for, *for this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.*” (2 Nephi 11:4; emphasis added.)

Sacrifices, for instance, were prominent among the ordinances of the Mosaic law. They foreshadowed the coming sacrifice of the Son of God, and were so understood by the descendants of Jacob, at least in the more righteous periods of their history. As a matter of fact, sacrifices had begun with Adam, and an angel in explaining their purpose had said to him: “*This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.*” (Moses 5:7-8; emphasis added.)

There was a similar similitude in the brazen serpent that Moses raised before Israel when the plague of poisonous serpents was among them. Speaking to Nicodemus, our Lord said: “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” (John 3:14-15; emphasis added.)

A Book of Mormon prophet, testifying of Moses' greatness, said:

Did he not bear record that the Son of God should come? And as he lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come.

And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal. (Helaman 8:14-15; emphasis added.)

Baptism, in like manner, is ordained to be performed by immersion so that it will symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. As Paul put it, we are "baptized into his death," "we are buried with him by baptism into death," and we are to come forth "in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Romans 6:3-5.)

As with baptism, so with the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The bread and wine are in similitude of his broken flesh and blood. "*This do in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:19; emphasis added) he said. And so it is with all the other ordinances and performances of the gospel. All are ordained in such a manner as to typify Christ, to bear testimony of him, to center the minds of the participants in him, for only in and through him is salvation possible.

THE FIRSTBORN

Christ is the Firstborn. Obviously he did not have this distinction as pertaining to his birth into mortality, for many millions preceded him in birth upon this earth.

But it must not be forgotten, however little the doctrine is known and believed in the present so-called Christian world, that all men lived in a pre-existent estate before they were born into this world; all were born in pre-existence as the spirit children of the Father. Christ was the Firstborn Spirit Child, and from that day forward he has had, in all things, the preeminence.

So Paul wrote to the Colossians that Christ was "the image of the invisible God, *the firstborn of every creature;*" (Colossians 1:15; emphasis added) so he advised the Romans that he was "*the firstborn among many brethren;*" (Romans 8:29; emphasis added) and so he revealed to the Hebrews that there was a Church among exalted beings in the celestial heaven which is called the "*church of the firstborn*" (Hebrews 12:23; emphasis added), even as the Church on earth is also named after him.

John was fully aware of the pre-existent status and greatness of Christ when he wrote of him: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*" (John 1:1-2; emphasis added.) Christ, the Word, the Firstborn, had, of course, attained unto the status of Godhood while yet in preexistence.

In modern times he has said: *“I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father.”* (D&C 93:21-23; emphasis added.)

If Christians everywhere only knew and believed that Christ was the Firstborn Son of a personal God in a pre-existent eternity, how it would affect the lives they are now living.

If the doctrine of pre-existence, a doctrine predicated on the personal nature of a personal God, were only recognized by men generally, what a wonderful flood of light it would throw on the question of why we are here in this life.

If men knew where they came from, why they are here, and that if faithful in all things they could become members of the Church of the Firstborn hereafter, would they not give more than the common lip-service to Christ?

How eternally important it is to know that Christ is the Firstborn! How grateful we should be for the inspired writings, both ancient and modern, which teach us these truths!

NAME OF CHRIST

All our scriptures are replete with instructions that all things are to be done in the name of Christ, for his name is honored above all, and yet how often among so-called Christians are prayers and other religious performances done without regard to his sacred name.

We have already seen that salvation itself comes only in and through his holy name. And now Paul, in language which few but he could use, adds this: *“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every, knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Philippians 2:9-11: emphasis added.)

Our Lord taught his disciples that they should pray in his name to the Father. (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-25; 2 Nephi 32:9; D&C 59:5.) He gave pointed instruction to the Nephites that the Church should be called in his name. *“And how be it my church,”* he said, *“save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.”* (3 Nephi 27:8; emphasis added.)

Similarly those who join his Church take upon themselves his name. *“I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ,”* was the urging of King Benjamin to the converted Nephites. *“And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ.”* (Mosiah 5:8-9; emphasis added.)

Where among even Christian people do we find real heart felt reverence for the name of Christ?

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

All our hopes of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come are centered in Christ. Except for him and his atoning sacrifice the whole purpose and end of the creation would have come to naught. His greatness and mission are beyond mortal comprehension. All honor, praise, power, and glory are his due.

“Believe in Christ, and deny him not,” said Nephi, *“and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out.”* (2 Nephi 25:28-29; emphasis added.)

That this is the course followed by the angels of heaven John certified to, for he beheld “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” of them saying: *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing . . . Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”* (Revelation 5:11-13; emphasis added.)

APPEARANCES OF CHRIST

The Lord’s plan in all ages has called for him to reveal himself to men who came before him in mighty faith. From the days of Adam, Christ has appeared to chosen prophets, men who through faith have gained power to part the veil. Through these appearances his personality has been made manifest and his purposes accomplished.

We have no record of a plainer or more complete revelation of his person than that which he gave to a Jaredite leader shortly after the days of the tower of Babel. “I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people,” he announced as he stood before the Brother of Jared. *“I am Jesus Christ . . . In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name . . . Behold, this .body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; . . . and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”* (Ether 3:14, 16; emphasis added.)

Our Old Testament records an appearance at a later date, not to one man alone, but to 74 faithful elders at once.

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel [the record recites],

And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also *they saw God*, and did eat and drink. (Exodus 24:9-11; emphasis added.)

After his resurrection our Lord appeared to many. His resurrected ministry among his disciples is well known. His appearances, after his formal ascension, to Paul and John are of record. But the *Book of Mormon* account of the risen Lord's ministry among the Nephites, less well known perhaps, is none the less the equal or superior of any scriptural account now had by any people.

First came his introduction by the voice of the Father: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him." (3 Nephi 11:7.)

Then followed his own personal appearance:

. . . They cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, *they saw a Man descending out of heaven*; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.

And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

Behold, *I am Jesus Christ*, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. (3 Nephi 11:8-11; emphasis added.)

Then follows the glorious account of his ministry among that chosen people, which every devout believer in Christ will want to read in detail, especially chapters 11 through 28 of 3rd Nephi in the *Book of Mormon*.

Some 400 years later, as the *Book of Mormon* record was drawing to its close the heavens were still opened on occasion to the faithful. "*I have seen Jesus*," Moroni exulted, and "*he hath talked with me face to face*." (Ether 12:39; emphasis added.)

Two resurrected appearances in glory—comparable to the spirit appearance to the 74 elders of Israel—are worthy of especial note. To John his Beloved, banished on Patmos, he gave the visions of eternity.

I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . . [came the voice of Christ to him].

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me [John said]. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one like unto the Son of man*, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white as wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; *I am the first and the last*:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:11-18; emphasis added.)

Without the imagery and symbolism which accompanied this great revelation of John, two latter-day prophets, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, in the Kirtland Temple, on the 3rd of April, 1836, received a similar visitation.

The veil was taken from our minds,” they recorded, “and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

We saw the Lord standing upon the breast work of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father. (D&C 110:1-4; emphasis added.)

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, recording their glorious vision of the degrees of glory, have left us this modern testimony of the ever living Christ:

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: *That he lives!*

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (D&C 76:22-24; emphasis added.)

CHRIST AND HIS PROPHETS

Now, What Think Ye of Christ?

We have presented the Lord's evidence as taken from the revelations he has given. We have seen that the coordinate testimony of all the prophets, ancient and modern, bears the same sure witness of his divinity and mission. To the impartial mind, the mind unshackled by se~arian dogmatism and the creeds of men, the record is dear.

Salvation is in Christ. He is the Firstborn Spirit Child of God the Eternal Father. He is the Creator of all things from the beginning. Since the fall of Adam, he has stood between us and the Father as our Mediator, our Advocate, our Intercessor. He is the Lord God Omnipotent, the Great I AM, the promised Messiah.

Of him all the prophets bore witness. Every rite, ordinance, and performance pertaining to our salvation has been ordained in such a manner as to bear witness of him and his atoning sacrifice.

He is the Son of God, literally, actually, as men are the sons of mortal parents; and he came into the world with life in himself, the power to lay down his life and the power to take it again. He is our Redeemer and Savior. By his grace he wrought out the infinite and eternal atonement, and he has given all men power to wash themselves clean in his blood.

Christ is the Light of the world; the possessor of a name that is above every, name that is named; an exalted personage worthy of all honor and praise, who has appeared to holy men in all ages, and who desires that all men come unto him and become joint heirs with him in his Father's kingdom.

In these great truths lie the hope of eternal life for mankind. And these great truths are known among men because the Lord revealed them through his prophets, and if there had been no prophets to receive light and truth from heaven and bear record of it to the world, the knowledge of Christ and of salvation would not be had among men.

Christ and his prophets are one. They go together. To accept the true testimony about Christ, men must believe in the divine mission of the prophets who bear that testimony. There can be no revelation without a receptive vessel to receive it.

To his apostles our Lord said:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandmen.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: *for without me ye can do nothing.* (John 15:1, 4-5; emphasis added.)

Christ and his prophets are as closely intertwined with each other, as closely tied together as the vine and the branches. And no man can pick the fruit of eternal life off the branches, as these are tied into the vine, without accepting both Christ and his prophets.

Our Lord taught this doctrine plainly. "*He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me,*" he said, "and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (John 13:20; emphasis added.)

"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." (Matthew 10:40-41; emphasis added.)

"He that receiveth my servants receiveth me; And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom." (D&C 84:36-38; emphasis added.)

"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." (Luke 10:16; emphasis added.)

COME UNTO CHRIST

If it had not been for Joseph Smith, the Prophet, the perfect knowledge of Christ would not be had in the world in this day. If it had not been for him and his mission there would be no legal administrators now on earth to administer in the ordinances of salvation. If he had not come the Church of Jesus Christ with all its saving powers and graces would not again be set up on earth.

But thanks be to God, there has been a restoration of divine truth in our day. The salvation which is in Christ has again been manifest among men and legal administrators, witnesses of the restoration, again bear solemn testimony to the world that he is the Son of God and that salvation may be gained by coming to him and his Church.

Come unto Christ, come unto him as he has revealed himself in this day. Come unto Christ, accept him as the mighty God and Savior that he is. Come unto Christ, come unto him by accepting the servants and agents whom he has appointed to carry the full truth

about him to the nations of the world. Come unto Christ, come and receive peace in this life, and a sure hope of eternal exaltation in the life to come.