

3 Nephi 11:1-2*Gather at Temple*

1 Some of us attend the temple a lot more times than we are really there, because our mind is focused on outside influences... We make covenants in the temple but we keep them in our homes and our everyday lives. Each time we attend the temple we should say, “Today I am going to the temple, will I be in the temple completely?”

Marshall Burton, CES Utah Valley South Area Conference, June 12, 2001.

2 I remember ... as a... boy, coming in from the field and approaching the old farm home... I could hear my mother singing, “Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?” (*Hymns*, 1950, no. 58). I can ...see her in my mind’s eye bending over the ironing board... with beads of perspiration on her forehead. She was ironing long strips of white cloth, with newspapers on the floor to keep them clean. When I asked her what she was doing, she said, “These are temple robes, my son. Your father and I are going to the Logan Temple.” Then she put the old flatiron on the stove, drew a chair close to mine, and told me about temple work—how important it [was] to be able to go to the temple and participate in the sacred ordinances performed there. She also expressed her fervent hope that some day her children ... grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have the opportunity to enjoy those priceless blessings. I am happy to say that her fondest hopes in large measure have been realized.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Aug. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 8

3 Sometimes in the peace of lovely temples, the serious problems of life find their solutions. [At times] pure knowledge flows to us there under the influence of the Spirit. I am grateful to the Lord for temples. The blessings of the House of the Lord are eternal. They are of the highest importance to us because it is in the temples that we obtain God’s greatest blessings pertaining to eternal life. Temples really are the gateways to heaven. May we remember always, as we [visit and work in these temples], that the veil may become very thin between this world and the spirit world. I know this is true. It is well also that we keep in mind that it is all one great program on both sides of the veil and it is not too important whether we serve here or over there, as long as we serve with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

Ezra Taft Benson, Address given at dedication of Denver Colorado Temple, Oct. 25, 186.

4 Nothing builds spiritually and our understanding of the priesthood principles more than regular temple attendance.

Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 4.

5 Temple building and the dedication of temples have gone on at such a pace in the last few years that some pay little attention and feel it is of small significance.

But the adversary has not been unmindful of it. The building and dedication of these sacred edifices has been accompanied by a surge of opposition from a few enemies of the Church as well as criticism from a few within. This has brought to mind a statement of Brigham Young in

1861 while the Salt Lake Temple was under construction. Evidently when someone with previous experience was asked to work on the Salt Lake Temple, he responded, “I do not like to do it, for we never began to build a Temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring.

To which Brigham Young replied, “I want to hear them ring again. All the tribes of hell will be on the move, if we uncover the walls of this Temple. But what do you think it will amount to? You have all the time seen what it as amounted to” (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:255-56).

Yes, in these recent times we have felt much of opposition, but we have also noted the frustration of those who have tried to stop the work. We have been strengthened, and we have moved forward under the promise of the Lord, who said, “I will not suffer that they [the enemy] shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto to them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil” (D&C 10:43).

Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 71

- 6 No member of the Church has received the ultimate which this Church has to give until he or she a received his or her temple blessings in the house of the Lord.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, p. 49

- 7 I promise you that, with increased attendance in the temples of our God, you shall receive increased personal revelation to bless your life as you bless those who have died.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 85

- 8 Regular temple attendance is one of the simplest ways you can bless those who are waiting in the spirit world... Elder John A. Widtsoe made this remarkable statement: “When the history of human thought shall be written from the point of view of temple worship, it may well be found that temples and the work done in them have been the dominating influence in shaping human thought from the beginning of the race” (*Temple Worship*, p. 52). Our joy—or our disappointment—in the eternities may hinge on our willing participation in this great latter-day-work.”

David B. Haight, *Ensign*, May 1993, p. 25

- 9 Look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your membership. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple... The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families. Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.

Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, p. 8.

- 10 For the Punta Arenas Saints it is a 4,200-mile round-trip bus ride to the Santiago temple. For a husband and wife it can take up to 20 percent of an annual local income just for the

transportation alone. Only 50 people can be accommodated on the bus, but for every excursion 250 others come out to hold a brief service with them the morning of their departure.

Pause for a moment and ask yourself when was the last time you stood on a cold, windswept parking lot adjacent to the Strait of Magellan just to sing with, pray for, and cheer on their way those who were going to the temple, hoping your savings would allow you to go next time? One hundred ten hours, 70 of those on dusty, bumpy, unfinished roads looping out through Argentina's wild Patagonia. What does 110 hours on a bus feel like? I honestly don't know, but I do know that some of us get nervous if we live more than 110 miles from a temple or if the services there take more than 110 minutes. While we are teaching the principle of tithing to, praying with, and building ever more temples for just such distant Latter-day Saints, perhaps the rest of us can do more to enjoy the blessings and wonder of the temple regularly when so many temples are increasingly within our reach.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004] 31

3 Nephi 11:3

Small Voices

- 11 Dramatic and miraculous answers to prayer may come, but they are the exceptions. Even at the highest levels of responsibility in this kingdom of God, which is being built up the earth, the voice is still small... My testimony is that the Lord is speaking to you! But with the deafening decibels of today's environment, all too often we fail to hear him.

Graham W. Doxey, *Ensign*, November 1999, 25.

- 12 "The still small voice is so quiet you won't hear it when you're noisy inside.
Henry B. Eyring, *BYU Devotional*, Oct. 29, 1989.

- 13 The voice of the Spirit is described in the scripture as being neither "loud" nor "harsh." It is "not a voice of thunder, neither... voice of great tumultuous noise." But rather, "a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper," and it can "pierce even to the very soul" and "cause [the heart] to burn." (3 Ne. 11:3; Hel.5:30; D&C 85:6-7.) Remember, Elijah found the voice of the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but was a "still, small voice." (1 Kgs. 19:12.)

The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it all. (No wonder that the Word of Wisdom was revealed to us, for how could the drunkard or the addict feel such a voice?)

Occasionally it will press just firmly enough for us to pay heed. But, most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw.

Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53.

- 14 Now, I testify it is a small voice. It whispers, not shouts. And so you must be very quiet inside. That is why you may wisely fast when you want to listen. And that is why you will listen best when you feel, "Father, thy will, not mine, be done." You will have a feeling of "I want what

you want.” Then, the still small voice will seem as if it pierces you. It may make your bones to quake. More often it will make your heart burn within which will lift and reassure.

Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 1991, p. 67.

15 The burning bushes, the smoking mountains... the Cumorahs, and the Kirtlands were realities; but they were the exceptions. The great volume of revelation came to Moses and to Joseph and comes to today’s prophet in the less spectacular way—that of deep impressions, without spectacle or glamour or dramatic events. Always expecting the spectacular, many will miss entirely the constant flow of revealed communication.

Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, Munich, Germany Area Conference 1973, p. 77

16 Answers to prayers come in a quiet way. The scriptures describe that voice of inspiration as a still small voice.

If you really try, you can learn to respond to that voice.

In the early days of our marriage, our children came at close intervals. As parents of little children will know, in those years it is quite a novelty for them to get an uninterrupted night of sleep.

If you have a new baby and another youngster cutting teeth, or one with a fever, you can be up and down a hundred times a night. (That, of course, is an exaggeration. It’s probably only twenty or thirty times.)

We finally divided our children into “his” and “hers” for night tending. She would get up for the new baby, and I would tend the one cutting teeth.

One day we came to realize that each would hear only the one to which we were assigned and would sleep very soundly through the cries of the other.

We have commented on this over the years, convinced that you can train yourself to hear what you want to hear, to see and feel what you desire, but it takes some conditioning.

There are so many of us who go through life and seldom, if ever, hear that voice of inspiration, because “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Boyd K. Packer, *Memorable Stories and Parables by Boyd K. Packer* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 43-44.

17 Some years ago I remember asking my father-in-law, a seasoned bishop, about a three-by-five-inch card he always carried in his shirt pocket. His reply was that at times he felt impressions or promptings. He then liked to pull out that card and write down those feelings, whenever they came. And then he tried to act upon them quickly as possible. It is humbling to consider that the still, small voice is always there for us, teaching us what to do and where to go. The Lord tells us that when the promptings are heeded, often more are given. If we do not follow them, the promptings eventually diminish.

Robert R. Steuer, *Ensign*, May 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002] 32

3 Nephi 11:7*Behold my Beloved Son*

18 The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:27.

19 A general consideration of scriptural evidence leads to the conclusion that God the Eternal Father has manifested Himself to earthly prophets or revelators on very few occasions and then principally to attest the divine authority of His Son, Jesus Christ.

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 36

20 Occasions when the Father has spoken directly to man include:

At the baptism of Christ (Matthew 3:17)

At the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5)

At the Triumphal Entry (John 12:28)

At the Sacred Grove (JS—H 1:28)

At the visit of Christ to the Americas (3 Nephi 11:7)

21 How few people in all the history of the world have heard the actual voice of God the Father speaking to them. As the people looked heavenward, “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.” [3 Nephi 11:8].

A glorious, resurrected being, a member of the Godhead, the Creator of innumerable worlds, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, stood before their very eyes.

Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 4 or *Ensign*, May 1987, 5.

3 Nephi 11:9-11

22 As the people gazed into heaven, a man clothed in a white robe descended, emanating the very essence of light and life. His glory was a splendid and sharp contrast to the three days of death and darkness experienced earlier by these people.

Then the Son Spoke, with a voice that penetrated to the marrow, saying simply, “I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.”

That appearance and that declaration constituted the focal point, the supreme moment, in the entire history of the Book of Mormon. It was the manifestation and the decree that informed and inspired every Nephite prophet for the previous six hundred years, to say nothing of their Israelite and Jaradite forefathers for thousands of years before that.

Everyone had talked of him, sung of him, dreamed of him, and prayed for his appearance—but here he actually was. The day of days! The God who turned every dark night into morning light had arrived....

23 Of all the messengers that could come from the scroll of eternity, what was the declaration he brought?... Fifty-six words. The essence of his earthly mission. Obedience and loyalty to the will of the Father, however, bitter the cup or painful the priced. This is a lesson he would teach these Nephites again and again during the three days he would be with them.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, pp. 250-251

3 Nephi 11:11

24 *Light & Life*

Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world because all things were made by Him. Under the direction and according to the plan of God the Father, Jesus Christ is the Creator, the source of the light and life of all things....

Jesus Christ is also the light of the world because His example and His teachings illuminate the path we should walk to return to the presence of our Father in Heaven....

Jesus Christ is the *light* of the world because He is the source of the light that quickens our understanding, because His teachings and His example illuminate our path, and because His power persuades us to do good.

Jesus Christ is the *life* of the world because of His unique position in what the scriptures call “the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death” (2 Nephi 11:5)....

Jesus Christ is also the life of the world because He has atoned for the sins of the world. Dallin H. Oaks, *With Full Purpose of Heart* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002], 11-14.

3 Nephi 11:11

25 *Bitter Cup*

At the end, meek and lowly Jesus partook of the most bitter cup without becoming the least bitter.... By their very nature, tests are unfair.

Neal A. Maxwell, Conference Report, Apr. 1989 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989], 77

26 Since the Lord wants a people “tried in all things” (D&C 136:31), how specifically will we be tried? He tells us, I will try the faith and the patience of my people (see Mosiah 23:21). Since faith in the timing of the Lord may be tried, let us learn to say not only, “Thy will be done,” but patiently also, “Thy timing be done”....

So, brothers and sisters, given what Jesus *died for*, are we willing to *live with* the challenges allotted to us? (see Alma 29:4, 6). Trembling is sometimes both permissible and understandable....

We are to ... finish the work we personally have been given to do; to be able to partake of a bitter cup without becoming bitter; ... to let our wills increasingly be swallowed up in the will of the Father; ...that, indeed, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 2001 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], 59, 61.

27 Many members, in drinking of the bitter cup that has come to them, wrongfully think that this cup passes by others. In His first words to the people of the Western continent, Jesus of Nazareth poignantly spoke of the bitter cup the Father had given Him (see 3 Ne. 11:11). Every soul has some bitterness to swallow. Parents having a child who loses his way come to know a sorrow that defies description. A woman whose husband is cruel or insensitive can have her heart broken every day. Members who do not marry may suffer sorrow and disappointment. Having drunk the bitter cup, however, there comes a time when one must accept the situation as it is and reach upward and outward. President Harold B. Lee said, “Do not let self-pity or despair beckon you from the course you know is right.” The Savior set the compass: we must be born again in spirit and heart,”
James E. Faust, “A Second Birth,” *Ensign*, June 1998, 2.

3 Nephi 11:11

28 *The Will of the Father*

It is as if those of us here in mortality are in a weight room filled with all of the equipment used to strengthen and build physical and spiritual muscle. Someone who wants to be strong and grow must be willing to submit to the work required for growth. The person who has worked hard consistently is able to see himself progress and build. When he approaches the weights, he carries with him a completely different attitude from that of the weekend warrior who occasionally enters this workout arena.

A person with a “my will” perspective stands before the long, steel bar of adversity with its heavy weights fastened on both ends. Unprepared to bear the load, he asks God to remove the weight from the bar so that he can lift it. He can raise the bar above the ground only by taking the weights off, and therefore his growth is minimal. The Lord stands willing and able to do so much more for this person but holds back because of the person’s lack of preparation.

In contrast, imagine a “thy will” group that has consistently attended the spiritual weight room. They have been working with the instructor—Heavenly Father—so that when the overwhelming weight of adversity is placed before them, they can rely on him to strengthen their backs to lift the bar. They are able to lift the bar, not because the weight has been removed but because a change has taken place in them. The muscles in their backs were strengthened through their faith in God and their desire to do whatever he asked of them—even to the extent that they are able to “submit cheerfully and with patience” (Mosiah 24:15). This strengthening, or broadening, of the back is a spiritual gift that exceeds any strength a person can acquire by trusting solely in the arm of flesh.

The only people I have seen in a typical weight room who are cheerful and patient are those who have been built up physically to the point that their muscles have been strengthened, even under the burden of some very heavy weights. This is just as true in spiritual weight rooms, where the weights of adversity, pain, affliction, and opposition become a great testing ground here in mortality. The Lord may choose to remove the weight, even for people with a “thy will” perspective. The point is that they understand that this is his decision rather than theirs. The

“thy will” perspective is being willing to do whatever is necessary to accomplish the will of the Lord.

K. Douglas Bassett, *The Barber’s Song* [Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort. 2005], 151-152.

In this unspeakably wrenching and nature-shattering pain, *Christ remained true...*

29 He went alone into the garden... Mark says He fell and cried, “Abba, Father” (Mark 14:36). Papa, we would say, or Daddy. This is not abstract theology now. This is a Boy pleading with His Dad, “Abba [Daddy, Papa]... all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me”...

He says, in effect, “If there is another path, I would rather walk it. If there is any other way—any other way—I will gladly embrace it.” “Let this cup pass from me,” Matthew says (Matthew 26:39). “Remove this cup from me,” says Luke (Luke 22:42). But in the end the cup does not pass.

Then He said and did that which most characterizes His life in time and in eternity... He yielded to the will of His Father and said, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (v.42)....

If you can leave your students one element of commitment in response to the Savior’s incomparable sacrifice for them,... try to help them see the necessity to obey—to, in their own difficult domain and hours of decision, yield, to suffer “the will of the Father” (3 Nephi 11:11), whatever the cost.... The thing Christ seems most anxious to stress about His mission—beyond the personal virtues and beyond the magnificent sermons and even beyond the healing, is that He submitted His will to the will of the Father...

Plead with your students to yield to the Father, to yield to the Son, to yield to the Holy Spirit. There is no other way.

Jeffrey R. Holland, “Therefore, What?” New Testament Conference, 8 Aug. 2000 [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 7-8.

3 Nephi 11:12

30 *Fell to the earth*

While great reverence is appropriate in chapels and temples, specific protocol is necessary in certain circumstances. When the prophet comes into the room the appropriate protocol is to stand, but when we go to the Lord we do so on our knees, with heads bowed low. “God must be approached carefully, respectfully, and with great preparation.”

Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, November 1977, 52.

3 Nephi 11:14

31 *Thrust your hands in my side*

However dim our days may seem, they have been a lot darker for the Savior of the world. As a reminder of those days, Jesus has chosen, even in a resurrected, otherwise perfected body, to retain for the benefit of His disciples the wounds in His hands and in His feet and in His side—signs, if you will, that painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect; signs, if you will, that pain in this world is *not* evidence that God doesn’t love you; signs, if you will, that problems pass and happiness can be ours. Remind others that it is the wounded Christ who is the Captain

of our souls, He who yet bears the scars of our forgiveness, the lesions of His love and humility, the torn flesh of obedience and sacrifice.

These wounds are the principal way we are to recognize Him when He comes. He may invite us forward, as He has invited others, to see and to feel those marks. If not before, then surely at that time, we will remember with Isaiah that it was for us that a God was “despised and rejected...; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” that “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa53:3,5)

Jeffrey R. Holland, “Therefore, What?” New Testament Conference, 8 Aug. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 9.

32 I found myself one evening in the dreams of the night in that sacred building, the temple. After a season of prayer and rejoicing I was informed that I should have the privilege of entering into one of those rooms to meet a glorious Personage, and, as I entered the door, I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious Being my eyes have ever beheld or that I ever conceived existed in all the eternal worlds. As I approached to be introduced, he arose and stepped towards me with extended arms, and he smiled as he softly spoke my name. If I shall live to be a million years old, I shall never forget that smile. He took me into his arms and kissed me, pressed me to his bosom, and blessed me, until the marrow of my bones seemed to melt! When he had finished, I knelt at his feet, and I bathed them with my tears and kisses, I saw the prints of the nails in the feet of the Redeemer of the world. The feeling that I had in the presence of him who hath all things in his hands, to have his love, his affection, and his blessing was such that if I ever can receive that of which I had but a foretaste, I would give all that I am, all that I ever hope to be to feel what I then felt.

Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Service of Melvin J. Ballard*, pp. 155-56.

3 Nephi 11:15

They went forth one by one

33 In that unprecedented appearance of the Father and the Son in the Sacred Grove, the very first word spoken by the Father of us all was the personal name of Joseph. Such is our Father’s personal relationship with each of us. He knows our names and yearns for us to become worthy to return to live with Him...

In the eyes of the Lord, there may be only *one size* of audience that is of lasting importance—and that is just *one*, each one, you and me, and each one of the children of God. The irony of the Atonement is that, it is infinite and eternal, yet it is applied individually, one person at a time....

Brothers and sisters, never, never underestimate how precious is the *one*.

M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, May 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 86-87.

34 C.S. Lewis put it this way: “[God] has infinite attention to spare for each one of us. He does not have to deal with us in the mass. You are as much alone with Him as if you were the only being He had ever created. When Christ died, He dies for you individually just as much as if you had been the only man [or woman] in the world” (*Mere Christianity* [1943], 131).

Dale E. Miller, Conference Report, Oct. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 13

35 Joseph Smith at age 14 had to be one of the least conspicuous human beings on the earth, and yet the God of Heaven knew him and called him by name in the Sacred Grove. I believe the Lord knows my name and your name as well... The scriptures testify, “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out”....

I bear my witness that He lives and loves us and calls up by name to come unto Him.

Sydney S. Reynolds, Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 78-79, 81.

36 Some eighty miles from Shreveport, Louisiana, lives the Jack Methvin family... Until just recently there was a lovely daughter... Her name was Christal....

There was discovered on her leg an unusual lump. The specialists in New Orleans completed their diagnosis and rendered their verdict: carcinoma. The leg must be removed.

She recovered well from the surgery, lived as buoyantly as ever and never complained. Then the doctors discovered that the cancer had spread to her tiny lungs. The Methvin family did not despair, but rather planned a flight to Salt Lake City. Christal could receive a blessing from one of the General Authorities. The Methvins knew none of the Brethren personally, so opening before Christal a picture of all the General Authorities, a chance selection was made. By sheer coincidence, my name was selected.

Christal never made the flight to Salt Lake City. Her condition deteriorated... But her faith did not waver. To her parents she said, “Isn’t a General Authority assign? And why not Brother Monson? If I can’t go to him, the Lord can send him to me.”...

For the weekend of the Shreveport Louisiana Stake Conference, I had been assigned to El Paso, Texas. President Ezra Taft Benson called me to his office and explained that one of the other Brethren had done some preparatory work regarding the stake division in El Paso. He asked if I would mind were another to be assigned the El Paso and I assigned elsewhere. Of course there was no problem... The day came. I arrived in Shreveport....

Charles F. Cagle asked if my schedule would permit me time to provide a blessing to a ten-year-old girl afflicted with cancer. Her name was Christal Methvin. I responded that, if possible, I would do so, and then inquired if she would be at the conference, or was she in a Shreveport hospital? Knowing the time was tightly scheduled, President Cagle almost whispered that Christal was confined to her home—*more than eighty miles from Shreveport!*

I examined the schedule of meetings for that evening and the next morning—even my return flight. There simply was no available time. An alternative suggestion came to mind. Could we not remember the little one in our public prayers at conference? Surely the Lord would understand. On this basis, we proceeded with the scheduled meetings.

When the word was communicated to the Methvin family, there was understanding but a trace of disappointment as well. Hadn't the Lord heard their prayers? Hadn't he provided that Brother Monson would come to Shreveport? Again the family prayed, asking for a final favor—that their precious Christal would realize her desire.

At the very moment the Methvin family knelt in prayer, the clock in the stake center showed the time to be 7:45.... I was sorting my notes, preparing to step to the pulpit, when I heard a voice speak to my spirit. The message was brief, the words familiar: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). My notes became a blur. My thoughts turned to a tiny girl in need of a blessing. The decision was made. The meeting schedule was altered. After all, people are more important than meetings....

The Methvin family had just arisen from their knees when the telephone rang and the message was relayed that early Sunday morning—the Lord's day—in a spirit of fasting and prayer, we would journey to Christal's bedside....

I have been in hallowed places—even holy houses—but never have I felt more strongly the *presence of the Lord than in the Methvin home. Christal looked so tiny lying peacefully on such a large bed...*

I gazed down at a child who was too ill to rise—almost too weak to speak. Her illness had now rendered her sightless. So strong was the spirit that I fell to my knees, took her frail hand in mine, and said simply, "Christal, I am here." She parted her lips and whispered, "Brother Monson, I just knew you would come."... A blessing was given. A faint smile crossed Christal's face. Her whispered "thank you" provided an appropriate benediction.

Four days later,... the pure spirit of Christal Methvin left its disease-ravaged body and entered the paradise of God.

[The meeting schedule was altered for one of the Lord's Apostles and the needs of the group were set aside to meet the needs of one person. The Lord still meets our needs "one by one."] Thomas S. Monson, Conference Report, Oct. 1975 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975], 29-31.

3 Nephi 11:16

37 The word *Hosanna* is a transliteration of a Hebrew word of supplication which means in essence "Oh, grant salvation." Evidently the people were asking the Savior to teach them the way to salvation; thus it is not surprising that he immediately teaches them the basic principles and ordinances of the gospel.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [1976], 262-62.

3 Nephi 11:18-26

38 *Baptism*

Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins is the first ordinance. Baptism must be by immersion, for it is symbolic of both the coming forth from temporal death, from the grave, and the cleansing required for redemption from spiritual death.

"... Under the plan, baptism is not just for entrance into the Church of Jesus Christ. It begins a spiritual rebirth that may eventually lead back into the presence of God.

If we really understood what baptism signifies, we could never consider it trivial nor alter the form of this sacred ordinance... Through the sacrament we renew the covenant.

Boyd K. Packer, *Our Father's Plan* [1984], 39-40.

39 Reading these verses, one may wonder whether Nephi did not already have priesthood authority and whether the ordinance of baptism was not already being practiced among the Nephites. The answer to both questions would be yes. Nephi already had authority, and baptism was already being practiced.

The doctrinal significance of these verses is not merely to reiterate the importance of baptism by the proper priesthood authority but rather to demonstrate the establishment of a new gospel dispensation among the Nephites and the accompanying ordinations and ordinances that a new dispensation necessitated.

Millet & McConkie, *Book of Mormon Commentary*, pp. 55-56.

40 There is nothing strange in the fact that when the Lord came to the Nephites, Nephi was baptized and so was everybody else although they had been baptized before.

The Church among the Nephites before the coming of Christ was not in its fulness and was under the law of Moses. The Savior restored the fulness and gave to them all the ordinances and blessings of the gospel. Therefore, it actually became a new organization, and through baptism they came into it.

We have a similar condition in this dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were baptized by command of the Angel John the Baptist. Several others were baptized before the organization of the Church. However, on the day the Church was organized, all who had been previously baptized were baptized again, not for the remission of sins, but for entrance into the Church. In each case the reason was the same.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3:205-6.

3 Nephi 11:28-30

41 *Contention*

It is noteworthy that the Savior did not limit his teaching about disputation and contention to those who had wrong ideas about doctrine or procedure. He forbade disputations and contention by everyone. The commandment to avoid contention applies to those who are right as well as to those who are wrong.

Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991], 142.

42 Shortly before I was married I was assigned with an older companion to serve as home teacher to an aged little lady who was a shut-in. She was a semi-invalid, and often when we knocked on the door she would call us to come in. We would find her unable to be about and would leave our message at her bedside...

On one occasion the senior companion was not able to go, for reasons that I do not remember, so I went alone...

I found the old lady in bed... She asked if I would kneel at the side of her bed and offer a prayer...

After the prayer—thinking, I suppose, of my coming marriage—she said, “Tonight I will teach you”... Then began the lesson I have never forgotten...

A few years after her marriage to a fine young man in the temple,... there had been some irritation and a disagreement; then some biting words between husband and wife. Interestingly enough, she couldn’t remember how it all started or what it was over. “But,” she said, “nothing would do but that I follow him to the gate, and as he walked up the street on his way to work I just had to call that last biting, spiteful remark after him.”

Then, as the tears began to flow, she told me of an accident that took place that day, as a result of which he never returned. “For fifty years,” she sobbed, “I’ve lived in hell knowing that the last words he heard from my lips were that biting spiteful remark.”

This was the message to her young home teacher. She pressed it upon me with the responsibility never to forget it. I have profited greatly from it. I have come to know since that time that a couple can live together without one cross word ever passing between them...

I have found occasion to leave her message with young couples at the marriage altar and in counseling people across the world.

Memorable Stories and Parables by Boyd K. Packer [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 11-13.

43 Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride. Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from hostile spoken words to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that “only by pride cometh contention” (Proverbs 13:10; 28:25).

Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, Apr. 1989 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989], 5.

44 Whenever factions exist among us, whenever disunion prevails, whenever there is opposition in views concerning points of doctrine or concerning counsel, it may be set down as indisputable that the Spirit of God is not in our midst and that there is something wrong. Whenever two men in this Church differ upon points of doctrine, they may know and others who may be acquainted with the fact may know also that there is something wrong; for the Spirit of God will not teach two men different ideas... Men may differ in their views, but after they have expressed these differences their contention should cease; in fact, it should never exist.... I do not care what we may claim or what our pretensions may be, we are not the people of God when we are not united. Union is one of the fruits of the Spirit.... [The devil] seeks for division, for contention and for strife.... He tries to persuade the people that it is true independence to divide up and every man go for himself and to refuse to do as the servants of God say.

George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truths*, ed. by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 159-160, 165.

President George Albert Smith had a creed...

- 45 “I would be a friend to the friendless and find joy in ministering to the needs of the poor.
 “I would visit the sick and the afflicted and inspire in them a desire for faith to be healed.
 “I would teach the truth to the understanding and blessing of all mankind.
 “I would seek out the erring and try to win him back to a righteous and a happy life.
 “I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right. I would live with the masses and help solve their problems that their earth life may be happy
 “I would avoid the publicity of high positions and discourage the flattery of thoughtless friends.
 “I would not knowingly hurt the feelings of any, not even one who may have wronged me, but would seek to do him good and make him my friend.
 “I would overcome the tendency to selfishness and jealousy and rejoice in the success of all the children of my heavenly Father.
 “I would not be an enemy to any living soul.
 “Knowing that the Redeemer of mankind has offered to the world the only plan that will fully develop us and make us really happy here and hereafter I feel it not only a duty but a blessed privilege to disseminate this truth.”

Matthew Cowley Speaks [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 209-210.

- 46 Should there be any quarrelling or fault-finding? No; because where the Spirit of God exists there is no disposition of this character. There is a manifestation to suffer wrong rather than to *do wrong; not to revile, not to prosecute, not to assail back when we are assailed. If a brother comes up to me, [and] he is in a band temper, he says something that is annoying, and I lose my temper and reply in the same spirit, do I do right? Certainly not. However much the provocation may be, it is not my duty as a Latter-day Saint... to indulge in any feeling or expression.... If a man forgets himself so far as to call his brother a liar, or any other offensive name, there should be enough of the Spirit of God and the spirit of patience and the spirit of self-respect left in the brother to bear the insult without resenting ion the same spirit... It is the duty of every man and woman in this Church to live at peace with everybody else, husbands with wives, wives with husbands, parents with children, children with parents, brothers with sisters and sisters with brothers.*

George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1882], 22:102-103.

- 47 Hugh Nibley said: “The family is also Satan’s primary target. He is waging war on the family. One of his schemes is the subtle and cunning way he has of sneaking behind enemy lines and entering our very homes and lives.

“He damages and often destroys families within the walls of their own homes. His strategy is to stir up anger between family members. Satan is the ‘father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to content with anger, one with another.’ (3 Nephi 11:29; emphasis added.) The verb stir sounds like a recipe for disaster: Put tempers on medium heat, stir in a few choice

words, and bring to a boil; continue stirring until thick; cool off; let feelings chill for several days; serve cold; lot of leftovers.”

Lynn G. Robbins, “Agency and Anger,” *Ensign*, May 1998, p. 80.

48 Where people have that Spirit with them, we may expect harmony. The Spirit puts the testimony of truth in our hearts, which unifies those who share that testimony. The Spirit of God never generates contention (see 3 Nephi 11:29). It never generates the feelings of distinctions between people which lead to strife (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 131). It leads to personal peace and a feeling of union with others. It unifies souls. A unified family, a unified Church, and a world at peace depend on unified souls.

Henry B. Eyring, Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 86; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 67.

49 Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him.

Abraham Lincoln (A letter to J. M. Cutts, Oct. 26, 1863)

50 He [Satan] damages and often destroys families within the walls of their own homes. His strategy is to stir up *anger* between family members... The verb *stir* sounds like a recipe for disaster: Put tempers on medium heat, stir in a few choice words, and bring to a boil; serve cold; lots of leftovers... This doctrine or command from the Lord presupposes agency and is an appeal to the conscious mind to make a decision. The Lord expects us to make the choice *not* to become angry.

Lynn G. Robbins, *Ensign*, May 1998, p. 80.

51 As we dread any disease that undermines the health of the body, so should we deplore contention, which is a corroding canker of the spirit... My concern is that contention is becoming accepted as a way of life. From what we see and hear in the media, the classroom, and the workplace, all are now infected to some degree with contention... Well do I remember a friend who would routinely sow seeds of contention in church classes. His assaults would invariably be preceded by this predictable comment: “Let me play the role of devil’s advocate.” Recently he passed away. One day he will stand before the Lord in judgment. Then, I wonder, will my friend’s predictable comment again be repeated.

Russell M. Nelson, Conference Report, Apr. 1989, p. 85.

52 Be one who nurtures and who builds. Be one who has an understanding and a forgiving heart, who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them. Be fair with your competitors, whether in business, athletics, or elsewhere. Don’t get drawn into some of the parlance of our day and try to ‘win’ by intimidation or by undermining someone’s character... The spirit of the Lord cannot dwell where there is bickering, judging, contention, or any kind of bashing.

Marvin J. Ashton, *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 20

53 I pray that we may be true to our covenants, true to each other' that we will cast out of our hears all that is evil, that we will not speak evil one of another, or be given to backbiting or contention or strife, for the spirit of wickedness destroys faith and tends to divide and separate instead of uniting and strengthening the people.

Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, October 1913, 74.

54 Let me conclude with an account of two men who are heroes to me. Their acts of courage were not performed on a national scale, but rather in a peaceful valley known as Midway, Utah.

Long years ago, Roy Kohler and Grand Remund served together in Church capacities. They were the best of friends. They were tillers of the soil and dairymen. Then a misunderstanding arose which became somewhat of a rift between them.

Later, when Roy Kohler became grievously ill with cancer and had but a limited time to live, my wife Frances and I visited Roy and his wife, and I gave him a blessings. As we talked afterward, Brother Kohler said, "Let me tell you about one of the sweetest experiences I have had during my life." He then recounted to me his misunderstanding with Grant Remund and the ensuing estrangement. His comment was, "We were sort of on the outs with each other."

"Then," continued Roy, "I had just put up our hay for the winter to come, when one night, as a result of spontaneous combustion, the hay caught fire, burning the hay, the barn, and everything in it right to the ground. I was devastated," said Roy. "I didn't know what in the world I would do. The night was dark, except for the dying embers of the fire. Then I saw coming toward me from the road in the direction of Grant Remund's place, the lights of tractors and heavy equipment. As the 'rescue party' turned in or drive and met me amidst my tears, Grant said, 'Roy, you've got quite a mess to clean up. My boys and I are here. Let's get to it.' Together they plunged to the task at hand. Gone forever was the hidden wedge which had separated them for a short time. They worked throughout the night and into the next day, with many others in the community joining in.

Roy Koyler has passed away, and Grant Remund is getting older. Their sons have served together in the same ward bishopric. I truly treasure the friendship of these two wonderful families.

Thomas S. Monson, Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 22 or *Ensign*, May 2002, 20-21.

3 Nephi 11: 28-40

My Doctrine

55 The "doctrine of Christ" as taught by Nephi... focuses on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end... "The doctrine of Christ" is simple and direct. It focuses on the first principles of the gospel exclusively... It is in the clarity and simplicity of "the doctrine of Christ" that its impact is found.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 49-50

3 Nephi 11:37*Become as a little child*

56 Christ would not have had His chosen representatives become childish; far from it, they had to be men of courage, fortitude, and force; but He would have them become childlike. The distinction is important. Those who belong to Christ must become like little children in obedience, truthfulness, trustfulness, purity, humility, and faith. The child is an artless, natural, trusting, believer; the childish one is careless, foolish, and neglectful.

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 360.

3 Nephi 11:39-4057 *Rock*

But if we are baptized only because the scriptures commands it, without first having repented of our sins, developed faith in Jesus Christ, and brought forth “fruit meet for repentance” (Alma 12:15), baptism is as much a dead work as the sacrifice of the Jews in the days of Isaiah when he wrote: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of the goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at you hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide min eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.” (1:11-15)...

Baptism is a public witness of our willingness to obey God in all things. We die to ourselves and are raised to new life in Jesus Christ. By obeying the commandment to be baptized, we remove the penalty of death for our transgressions of the law of God. Our obedience also declares or determination to “live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:43-44;...

Storms are coming, and those who hear and do the things of which Jesus speaks build on the rock. They will be able to withstand, not because of their righteousness, but by virtue of the strength and power resident in the rock, who is Christ Jesus, the Eternal Son of God (see Alma 37:33-37: Hel. 5:12).

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to be Perfect*.