

## “Unto the Convincing of Men”

### *The Convincing Power of the Spirit and Missionary Work*

By David Golding

By late August, 1830, Parley P. Pratt had already read the Book of Mormon and was convinced of its truthfulness. He returned to see Hyrum Smith whom he had met days earlier and asked to be baptized. Hyrum introduced Parley to Oliver Cowdery the following day, and Parley’s request was carried out: he “was baptized by the hand of an Apostle” and soon thereafter confirmed a member of the Church, given the gift of the Holy Ghost, and ordained an Elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood.<sup>1</sup> Parley had long shared his religious views to fulfill a self-appointed duty “to enlighten mankind,” but he never felt comfortable assuming divine authority to call himself a minister.<sup>2</sup> Anxious to declare the truthfulness of the gospel and confident in his new calling, Parley wrote, “I now felt that I had authority in the ministry.”<sup>3</sup> Less than a week later, Parley organized his first public gathering as an ordained minister. He preached before a “large concourse of people,” later writing that, “The Holy Ghost came upon me mightily. I spoke the word of God with power, reasoning out of the Scriptures and the Book of Mormon. The people were convinced, overwhelmed in tears, and four heads of families came forward” to be baptized.<sup>4</sup>

This account of the beginnings of what would become a life-long ministry describes one of Parley P. Pratt’s experiences with the “power of God unto the convincing of men” (see D&C 11:21). Other missionaries of the nineteenth century also noted similar episodes during their ministries and routinely

connected missionary success with the convincing power. Additionally, scriptural examples illustrate ancient understanding of God’s power to convince, and provide critical instructions for seeking this spiritual gift.

A verse commonly used to teach the importance of missionary preparation is D&C 11:21—“Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men.” When examined in reverse order, the nature of the Lord’s convincing power is defined clearly as the culmination of His Spirit and His word. Like Elder Pratt in 1830, a desirous person may teach with enough power through the Spirit to bring a convincing effect upon an audience. This power is a function, or tool, of the Spirit that establishes the truth of things as they have been, as they are, and as they are to come (see Jacob 4:13) and through it, man can be invited to change, to repent, and to progress. Regardless of a person’s worthiness or wickedness, this power can bear down on one in plainness (see 2 Ne. 33:5) to the point that one must acknowledge the truth.<sup>5</sup>

Being convinced of gospel truth is not the same as being converted to it. Latter-day Saints rightfully see conversion, not convincing, as the main goal of missionary work. President Spencer W. Kimball taught:

If the Lord were primarily interested in *convincing* people of the divine nature of this work, he could, and perhaps would, demonstrate his powers in such a way that large numbers of people could know the truth in a relatively brief period of time.... But if those persons thus convinced did not really change their lives for the better, repent of their sins and turn to him in righteousness, they would be worse off than before and would be more insensitive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

No, the Lord is not primarily interested in having his children only convinced of his work. He would like them to be converted to the gospel.<sup>6</sup>

After a persuasive witness has been proffered, a person may choose to reject the convincing evidence. When one turns away from this most powerful influence of the Spirit, his or her conversion is compromised. In a revelation to Nephi, the Lord explained that “on the one hand,” people will be convinced by His “great and marvelous work,” or on “the other” hand, people will be delivered “to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their

minds” (see 1 Ne. 14:7). Likewise, a withdrawal of the Spirit is likely when one dismisses its invitation, as the Prophet Joseph Smith explained:

There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him.<sup>7</sup>

Elder Parley P. Pratt, who frequently met with convincing sermons, during another mission wrote that “hundreds of the people were convinced of the truth” *yet* their hearts “were too much set on the world to obey the gospel.” Because he noticed they were already convinced of gospel truth, further attempts on his part to bring about conversion would only be overbearing and lacking. Aware of his own role as a gospel teacher, Elder Pratt did not linger in an effort to force conversion, rather departed soon thereafter with only having baptized a few converts.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed the Lord has the ability to bring about instant proof of all truth. In fact, the scriptures promise a future day when “every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philip. 2:11; see also Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Mosiah 27:30–31; and D&C 88:103–104). But for the time being, mankind is in mortal probation, learning for themselves to distinguish truth from error<sup>9</sup> and deciding to what degree they will follow the gospel. For all individuals, now is a time for preparation to meet God, a time to learn and make choices (see Alma 34:32–33); on the other hand, for gospel teachers, now is a time of invitation and warning, a time for the gospel to be declared with conviction and power (see D&C 63:57–58). No matter how compellingly one has been worked upon by the Spirit, ultimately one’s agency determines one’s level of conversion. Time and agency, as blessings of the Lord, allow for mankind to grow in conversion and indicate why cosmic global convincing witnesses are not yet apparent. All a missionary can do to help others increase in devotion to the gospel is to teach by persuasion and love with no coercion (see D&C 63:64). Indeed, the greatest form of persuasion is total conviction. Thus, in the capacity of a missionary, one’s effectiveness is maximized when teaching by the convincing power.<sup>10</sup> Although personal conversion is ultimately the choice of every individual,<sup>11</sup> a greater understanding of the doctrine of the

convincing power and how missionaries have utilized it effectively will benefit gospel teachers in desiring this power and will aid them in understanding how to provide the best opportunities to invite conversion.

### **The Spirit to Convince Mankind**

Communion with the Holy Spirit is experienced through the exercise of faith (see Jarom 1:4). This communion may occur with multitudes of people at the same moment (see Mosiah 4:20). One need not be baptized to feel the Holy Spirit, but to have its influence “more abundantly,” one must be confirmed a member of the Church (see Mosiah 18:10). The Spirit is the Great Communicator, able to impart precisely the needed influences to bring any individual to an assurance of the truth.

When the Spirit is the teacher, the effect is felt by both righteous and wicked. With terms like the “softening” or “pricking” of hearts, the scriptures describe this effect. Notice, for example, how the Prophet Nephi’s heart was softened by the Lord:

I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father. ... And I spake unto Sam, making known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested unto me *by his Holy Spirit* (1 Ne. 2:16-17; emphasis added).

The Book of Mormon tells of a time when “the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into” the hearts of not only the Lord’s servants, but also Nephite and Lamanite “dissenters,” who were “filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words” (see Hel. 5:27, 45 [21–51]).

Subsequent examples illustrate connections between the Holy Spirit’s convincing influence and the activities of missionaries, angels, and whole congregations.

### **Missionary Activities**

The Prophet Nephi observed that his ability to speak “mightily” was different than his ability to write forcefully because “when a man speaketh by

the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Ne. 33:1). While missionaries of the nineteenth century certainly made attempts to proliferate written tracts, often their use of public speaking methods brought a more noticeable convincing effect.

When President Lorenzo Snow was ordained an Elder, he started out on his first mission on foot and alone, proclaiming the gospel in Ohio. Arriving at his uncle’s neighborhood, Elder Snow faced a gathered assembly apprehensively, feeling it a “sore trial.” But he “believed and felt an assurance that a Spirit of inspiration would prompt and give [him] utterance.” Personal preparation, fasting, prayer, and humility were part of Elder Snow’s experience as a missionary. Now he was to stand “in the capacity of a preacher” and impart the gospel to a “respectable congregation,” never having before preached in his life. Although he “knew not one word” that he was supposed to say, he recounts that, “as soon as I opened my mouth to speak, the Holy Ghost rested mightily upon me, filling my mind with light and communicating ideas and proper language by which to impart them.” His message was received with success. He recalled, “The people were astonished and requested another meeting.” At this time, some were baptized including Elder Snow’s future wife.<sup>12</sup>

As an apostle, President John Taylor served a mission to the British Isles at a time when the work was expanding at an unprecedented pace. Eager to declare repentance to the people of England, and feeling the word of God “like fire in [his] bones,” Elder Taylor canvassed Liverpool seeking halls licensed for preaching. Among those that responded favorably was William Mitchell, a preacher from a Baptist society. B. H. Roberts, in his biography of Elder Taylor, explained that after Mitchell had invited Elder Taylor to teach in his home, the house was filled during the next week “notwithstanding all the efforts on the part of ... preachers and class-leaders to prevent their members from going.” Groups of at least three-hundred people came to hear Elder Taylor’s message. Citing the history of the Reformation and noting the efforts of “Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Wesley, Whitfield, and others,” he preached with references from the New Testament to support the claim that such reformation failed to “bring about the ancient order of things.” After speaking of the ministrations of angels and how the Prophet Joseph had received

revelations from the Lord, Elder Taylor “showed them how what they had been praying for was now accomplished, and exhorted them to receive it.” Roberts noted that “the effect of his discourse was overwhelming. Exclamations of praise and thanksgiving were heard in various parts of the house, while the weeping of others testified to the emotion they could not express otherwise.” When the meeting closed, ten persons “offered themselves for baptism.”<sup>13</sup>

Elder Heber C. Kimball had the special gift of the convincing power many times throughout his missions. His demeanor when persuading others to be saved epitomizes the ideal for all gospel teachers. Biographer Stanley B. Kimball wrote:

Heber capitalized on his natural talents. He was simple, sincere, and personal. Although he often preached publicly, he sought individuals in their private homes, and most of his converts were made in more intimate gatherings rather than in open meetings. While no copy of his early sermons survives, Brigham Young did record that he would say to someone, “Come my friend, sit down; do not be in a hurry.” Then he would begin to preach the Gospel in a plain, familiar manner, and “make his hearers believe everything he said, and make them testify of its truth, whether they believed it or not, asking them ‘Now you believe this? You see how plain the Gospel is? Come along, now,’” and he would lead them into the waters of baptism. He was popular. Sometimes people would stay with him all day and were often converted after one sermon. At the right moment, “he would put his arm around their necks and say, ‘Come let us go down to the water.’” When his own sons became missionaries, he urged them to preach short and simple sermons, directed by the spirit, and told them, “I said but little, but what I did say went straight to the hearts of the honest.”<sup>14</sup>

More of his successes as a missionary are recorded in Elder Kimball’s journal:

It being known that we had but a short time to remain in that country, great numbers flocked to hear us preach, and many were baptized. Some days we went from house to house, conversing with the people on the things of the kingdom, and by such a course were instrumental in

convincing many of the truth. I have known as many as twenty persons baptized in one day who have been convinced on such occasions.<sup>15</sup>

As Elder Kimball and his companions administered baptism, scores of additional prospective converts were found. On some occasions, he would administer baptism “six or seven times in a day.” People would request the ordinance so frequently at times that after changing his wet clothes and before returning to his home, he would have to go back to the water for more baptizing.<sup>16</sup>

### **Angels and Congregations as Media for the Convincing Power**

The story of Alma the Younger’s conversion demonstrates how an angel may play a convincing role through the Spirit.<sup>17</sup> As Alma the Younger and the Sons of Mosiah went about “seeking to destroy the church,” an angel appeared in such power that they all “fell to the earth” (Mosiah 27:10, 12). The angel, whose voice was so intense that it shook the ground, said, “for this purpose have I come *to convince thee* of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.” After “two days and two nights,” Alma awoke from having been carried away in the Spirit and expressed his conviction and conversion to the gospel by saying, “I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold, I am born of the Spirit” (Mosiah 27:14–15, 24; italics added).<sup>18</sup>

The Holy Spirit can work a convincing effect through multitudes of people. One such event occurred during the mission of Dan Jones, a Welshman who served in the nineteenth century. Elder Jones had become acquainted with a native Hindu gentleman who had approached him “for charity.” As a youth, Jones had lived in India and felt an immediate connection with him. He could recall little Hindi, but was able to communicate sufficiently that the man learned of the Church and “appeared very thankful for the instructions he received.” Elder Jones wrote to British Mission president Orson Spencer that he took the Hindu gentleman to the regular church meetings that Sunday, “and requested the Saints to pray that the great dispenser of all spiritual gifts would cause him to be instructed in a language which he understood.” As a result, the congregation of Saints began

experiencing outpourings of the gift of tongues and “before the close of the meeting,” Elder Jones and the Saints there witnessed that “he had heard a language which he understood.” The man was so impressed by their speaking Hindi that he “pulled a Hindoostanee hymn-book out of his pocket, and fain would sing in the meeting with them, supposing they could follow him in that too.” The daughter of Margaret Morris Mathews, a sister who sang in tongues in that meeting, wrote that the man “sang with her, the tears streaming down his cheeks” and asked “who the lady was who sang so perfectly” a tune he had heard his own mother sing to him as a boy. The following day, Elder Jones and others taught for four hours “so plain and forcibly, that before [the Hindu] left the room he requested to be baptized.” This man was later baptized on 21 July 1847 “thus becoming the first Hindu convert to the Church.”<sup>19</sup>

### **“The Virtue of the Word”: The Word of God to Convince Mankind**

As noted previously, the word and the Spirit, when used together, can effect the convincing power. Thus, the word of God (including, and especially, the Book of Mormon) is the fundamental text and message that leads mankind to conversion.

Without overstating its significance, the title page of the Book of Mormon was likely written by the Prophet Moroni and “is a literal translation, taken on the very last leaf” of the plates.<sup>20</sup> The two paragraphs that comprise this introduction mention one key component of the powerful nature of the Book of Mormon: “And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations” (Book of Mormon, Title Page). Designed by God through Prophets, the text of this book was made to be convincing evidence to all who read it.

The Lord describes the nature of His word in revelation by stating, “A great and marvelous work<sup>21</sup> is about to come forth among the children of men. Behold, I am God; give heed to my word which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore, give heed unto my word” (D&C 11:1-2). The Prophet Mormon wrote that,

The preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds

of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God (Alma 31:5).

The Articles of Faith state that we believe “the Book of Mormon to be the word of God” (A of F 8). Also, the “Articles and Covenants of the Church”<sup>22</sup> state that the Book of Mormon “was given by inspiration, ...proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true” (D&C 20:8, 10-11). In other words, “give heed to *the Book of Mormon* which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore, give heed unto *the Book of Mormon*.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught,

The “choice” translator brought forth—“by the gift and power of God”—the Book of Mormon, something tangible and verifiable. For all who heed it, the Book of Mormon is like the flinging open of long-closed doors on what was assumed to be a complete canon of scripture.

Noted on the very title page is the book’s special role in “convincing” mortals “that Jesus is the Christ.” In a day of disbelief and equivocation regarding this preeminent fact, this “convincing” effect is so needed! How sharp-edged that promise!<sup>23</sup>

A person may seek out the convincing power of God’s word to amplify one’s own personal conviction and commitment to the gospel. President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “We have an increasing number who have been convinced, through the Book of Mormon, that Jesus is the Christ. Now we need an increasing number who will use the Book of Mormon to become committed to Christ. We need to be convinced and committed.”<sup>24</sup>

## **The Value of Teaching the First Principles of the Gospel**

Nephi had great joy in writing the truths of the gospel “in plainness” (2 Ne. 33:6). He condemned those that would not “search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be” (2 Ne. 32:7). Indeed, the simplicity of the gospel is powerful. When accompanied by the influence of the Spirit, the first principles

of the gospel are persuasive. Effective missionaries have always based their preaching on these principles.

Elder Heber C. Kimball and his companions, during their mission to England in 1837, began their efforts with a visit to the brother of Joseph Fielding (one of the missionaries), a minister in Preston. Reverend Fielding, without any request from the Elders themselves, “gave out an appointment for some one of [them] to preach in the afternoon.” As news spread that some American Elders had arrived to preach, a large audience gathered. Elder Kimball remembered that, “it falling to my lot to speak, I called their attention to the first principles of the gospel.” Orson Hyde followed and “bore testimony to the same,” afterwards scheduling another appointment for the evening. Others preached, all bearing testimony of the restored gospel. Elder Kimball’s journal records, “A number now being convinced of the truth, believed the testimony and began to praise God.” Eight days later, the missionaries began baptizing many who had been “in a great measure prepared for the reception of the gospel, probably as much so as Cornelius was anciently.”<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most excellent example of the effectiveness of teaching the first principles of the gospel is that of Elder Wilford Woodruff’s missionary labors in Herefordshire, England. Considered by many to be one of the greatest missionaries of all time, Elder Woodruff worked so closely with the Spirit that over six-hundred people were baptized during his relatively short stay. He recorded that he preached morning, afternoon, and evening to audiences “estimated to number a thousand.” During one such conference, Elder Woodruff wrote that he preached for over an hour “the first principles of the everlasting gospel.” His sermon was so powerful that at the close of the meeting “seven offered themselves” for baptism. Of his sermon, Elder Woodruff remembered that “The power of God rested upon me, the spirit filled the house, and the people were convinced.” In just thirty days after arriving in Herefordshire, he baptized “forty-five preachers” and one-hundred-sixty others. Of all the topics Elder Woodruff could have chosen to preach, it is noteworthy that this model missionary centered his teachings on the first principles of the gospel and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

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Some gospel students desire miracles or signs instead of the convincing power of the Spirit, mistaking such evidences as more forceful proofs of truth.

Elder George A. Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of a time when the Prophet Joseph Smith met with a Campbellite preacher whom he remembered as “Hayden.” The preacher had approached the Prophet after a journey of “considerable distance” with the expressed purpose of being “convinced of the truth.” Elder Smith remembered that Hayden pledged to not only align himself with the gospel cause but to dedicate all his “talents and time in defending and spreading the doctrines” of the kingdom. Hayden self-importantly explained that to convince him would be “equivalent to convincing all [his] society, amounting to several hundreds.” Joseph Smith did not decline from the opportunity to convince the man but rather began to explain the “coming forth of the work, and the first principles of the Gospel.” Hayden was frustrated at this, and demanded a more powerful manifestation from the Prophet. He was remembered to have said, “O this is not the evidence I want, the evidence I wish to have is a notable miracle” and argued that if Joseph could not perform some spectacular miracle, he would become the Church’s “bitterest enemy.” Joseph parried the challenge by saying, “Well, what will you have done? Will you be struck blind, or dumb? Will you be paralyzed, or will you have one hand withered? Take your choice, choose which you please, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ it shall be done.” Hayden withdrew.<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

Missionary experiences from the nineteenth century and the Scriptures are replete with evidences of the “power of God unto the convincing of men.” Combining the use of the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, the first principles of the gospel, and the ministration of the Holy Spirit provides opportunities for the convincing power to be experienced. Through the continued use of the convincing power, more will be brought to a knowledge of the truth. More will find the joys mentioned in Nephi’s final words, “I glory in plainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985), 24–27. See also Doctrine and Covenants Section 20.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 14–16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>5</sup> A likely example of this is found in the New Testament. Peter and John were asked by a Jewish council by what power they were able to heal a man who was lame since birth. “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,” told them it was by the power of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:8–10). “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. “And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. “But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, “Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and *we cannot deny it*” (Acts 4:13–16; emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> Edward L. Kimball, ed., *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 570. Italics in original.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), 4:555.

<sup>8</sup> Pratt, 73.

<sup>9</sup> See 1 Jn. 4:6; Alma 12:24; 2 Ne. 2:16. The Prophet Lehi taught that the Lord “prolonged” time for men to repent (2 Ne. 2:21), thus providing an opportunity to increase one’s degree of conversion; the great moment when all will be convinced is held in reserve to give way for individual growth. However, personal experiences of the convincing power should (and in the ultimate sense, will) occur in each individual’s life.

<sup>10</sup> Missionary duties of the elders are to sound the “voice of warning” (D&C 1:4) and to “thrash the nations by the power of [the Lord’s] Spirit” (D&C 35:13) thereby proclaiming the gospel “unto all who have not received it” (D&C 84:75)—not to “boast themselves of these things” (D&C 84:73) or to “contend with others on account of their faith, or systems of religion,” as Joseph Smith taught. (Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith. [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2002], 109.) Hence, no missionary is the agent of personal conversion, but the medium through which God may more compellingly convince His children. In great interest to have mankind be converted to truth, God persuades His children in His own time through His servants, His Spirit, and His word.

<sup>11</sup> For more on current doctrinal teachings regarding the individualized process of conversion, see *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, True to the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 2004), 41.

<sup>12</sup> Lorenzo Snow, “Autobiography,” in Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), 15–16.

<sup>13</sup> B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892), 78–80.

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<sup>14</sup> Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 47, 54 fn 7–8.

<sup>15</sup> Heber C. Kimball, *President Heber C. Kimball's Journal* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 43.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> 2 Ne. 32:3 teaches, “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Even though this example shows an angel manifesting God’s power, it is assumed that this episode was attended also by the power of the Spirit and as such, is pertinent to the discussion at hand.

<sup>17</sup> Alma’s conversion led him to become one of the most prolific missionaries of the Book of Mormon. As an instrument in spreading the gospel to thousands of souls in the Nephite nation, Alma taught forcefully that Christ would come as the Savior of the world amid popular dogma that propagated otherwise. The Prophet Mormon commented on the secret of Alma’s teaching success when he wrote that Alma “began to declare the word of God unto the church . . . according to the revelation of the truth of the word . . . and according to the spirit of prophecy which was in him, according to the testimony of Jesus Christ . . . and the holy order by which he was called” (Alma 6:8). The gift of prophecy was abundant in the messages Alma declared to his people. In what is now Alma 5, he described the spirit of prophecy and its influence on himself as he was made known of the truth. He taught that the “Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit.” This knowledge and the influence of the Holy Ghost produced what he also called the “spirit of revelation” and “the spirit of prophecy, which is also . . . the manifestation of the Spirit of God” (Alma 5:46–47). The convincing power includes at times manifestations of angels, the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald D. Dennis, “The Welsh and the Gospel,” *Truth Will Prevail* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987), 256–257.

<sup>20</sup> *History of the Church*, 1:71.

<sup>21</sup> This term “great and marvelous work” has direct reference to the Book of Mormon. See . . .

<sup>22</sup> *Evening and Morning Star*, June 1832, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Neal A. Maxwell, “How Choice a Seer!” *Conference Report*, October 2003, 105.

<sup>24</sup> Ezra Taft Benson, “Come Unto Christ,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 84.

<sup>25</sup> Heber C. Kimball, 18–19.

<sup>26</sup> Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), Matthias F. Cowley, prep., 117–119.

<sup>27</sup> George A. Smith, “Arguments of Modern Christian Sects Against the Latter-day Saints,” *Journal of Discourses*, 2:326.

<sup>28</sup> See 2 Ne. 33:6.