BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES

by

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Gospel Doctrine Department Course of Study for the Sunday Schools of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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PREFACE

In planning the course of study each year for the Gospel Doctrine Department, the committee attempts to provide material that emphasizes the special opportunities and responsibilities adults have to apply gospel principles to the betterment of home and community conditions. It is the practical application of the principles found in the gospel of Jesus Christ that will lead to the greatest happiness in this life and exaltation with our Savior throughout eternity. Certainly such a study is most appropriate for the adult members of the Church upon whom devolves the responsibility of leadership in family and community life.

For the past four years this has been accomplished through study of the material found in the Old and New Testaments. For the year 1948 we turn to another of our Standard Works to assist us in solving our problems of today and to learn the ways and will of the Lord. The Book of Mormon has been chosen as our basic text and the material contained herein is based upon that book. The author of this year's series of lessons is Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of the faculty of Brigham Young University. Dr. Sperry needs no introduction to members of the Gospel Doctrine Department inasmuch as he was the author of the 1944 course of lessons for that department.

It is to be remembered that the contents of the Book of Mormon can only be of value to us if we apply the teachings contained therein to our living. The fundamental truths taught by the Book of Mormon are timeless in their application and are particularly appropriate for study at this time, because of the close parallel to be found between the experiences of those people and the conditions existing in the world today. It is to be hoped that as this study progresses, comparisons will be made with our present day problems and solutions pointed out by the contents of the Book of Mormon will be of assistance in meeting the problems encountered in individual, family and community life.

It is hoped that in the preparation of the presentation of the lessons of this year's course, the teacher will make regular and complete use of the methodological helps and enrichment materials found in the teacher's supplement for this department and in the current issues of The Instructor.

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THE LITERARY STRUCTURE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MOSIAH. With the Book of Mosiah we begin a study of Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi. The book is of moderate size, containing 29 chapters. Historically it is one of the most interesting books in the Nephite record. It deals with the declining years of King Benjamin, with the accession of his eldest son Mosiah to the throne, with an expedition that found the lost people of Zeniff, with their discovery and return to the main body of the Nephites, and, finally, with the last years and death of the younger Mosiah. It should also be pointed out that the last part of the book marks a change in the form of Nephite government since by reason of Mosiah's influence the government was changed from a monarchy to that of a government by judges democratically elected. The book covers a period of nearly forty years' history from about 130 B.C. to 91 B.C. From the standpoint of literary forms, the book is composed mostly of historical narrative, oratory, and sermons. The reader will not find any summary of contents at the head of the book such as was found in 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, and Jacob. However, brief superscriptions will be found over Chapter 9 and Chapter 23. This book falls into four natural divisions as follows:

I. The events of King Benjamin's declining years (Chs. 1-6.)
II. The discovery of Zeniff's people. (Chs. 7, 8.)
III. History of Zeniff's people from time of departure until reunited with Mosiah's subjects in Zarahemla. (Chs. 9-24.)
IV. Mosiah's reign from time of the return of Zeniff's people until his death. (Chs. 25-29.)

The reader will observe that the account of Mosiah's reign is interrupted after Chapter 8 by the introduction of the records of Zeniff and Alma (Chs. 9-24). Without these interesting but interpolated histories, the Book of Mosiah would have been much smaller indeed—eleven chapters or less.

KING BENJAMIN EXHORTS HIS SONS. In Chapter 1 of the Book of Mosiah, we find a number of worthwhile religious topics to discuss. As we have already pointed out, the early part of the Book of Mosiah deals with the declining years of King Benjamin. It will be remembered that his earlier years are discussed briefly in verses 23-30 of the Book of Omni and in verses 12-18 of the Words of Mormon. The later years of King Benjamin's reign were peaceful, because he had overcome his enemies in the earlier days of his reign. He had three sons, whose names were, beginning with the eldest, Mosiah, Helorum, and Helaman. Verse 2 of this chapter says that Benjamin caused his boys to be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding. These words should be of interest to all of us. All teaching should be done with the object of making men and women of understanding. Modern education is of value mainly if it increases our wisdom and faith, and our under-
standing of the world and its people. Benjamin seems to have spent considerable time teaching his sons the scriptures which were written upon the Brass Plates. He pointed out to his boys that except for the scriptures his people must have remained in ignorance of the great spiritual realities and the mysteries of God which were contained in them. It may be well for all of us to observe the following words which he said to them:

"I say unto you, my sons, were it not for these things [Brass Plates], which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of his mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief, and we should have been like unto our brethren, the Lamanites, who knew nothing concerning these things, or even do not believe them when they are taught them, because of the traditions of their fathers, which are not correct." (Mosiah 1:5.)

If the modern generation took as much interest in the scriptures, and were as careful to teach them to their children as King Benjamin, we should have less juvenile delinquency to plague us. Benjamin’s advice to his sons to “remember to search them [the scriptures] diligently, that ye may profit thereby,” (Mosiah 1:7) is still sound in a modern world.

**Benjamin Charges Mosiah with the Affairs of the Kingdom.** King Benjamin knew his death would come shortly, and he therefore made preparations to confer his kingdom upon his eldest son, Mosiah. He called Mosiah before him and charged him to make a proclamation among all of his people to gather on the morrow into the temple at Zarahemla so that he could give them his last words. He told Mosiah that he wanted to give his people a name whereby they could be distinguished above all people which the Lord had brought out of Jerusalem. His people had been diligent in keeping God’s commandments, and he wanted to give them a charge and a new name in order that they might never be blotted out on God’s records except through transgression. He also informed his son that if his people fell into transgression and became wicked and adulterous, they would become weak like their brethren, and the Lord would no more preserve them by his matchless and marvelous powers as He had hitherto done (Mosiah 1:15). After telling Mosiah these things, King Benjamin delivered to him the Brass Plates, the plates of Nephi, the sword of Laban, the ball or director, and, as we shall see later, the “holy interpreters,” or Urim and Thummim, as we know them (1:16). Mosiah did as his father had commanded him, and proclaimed to all of the people in Zarahemla that they should gather to the temple on the morrow (1:18). Verse 18 is worthy of our notice because it shows us that at this time the people of Zarahemla were still relatively small in number. (This is probably true despite 2:2.) The fact that they could be called up overnight to come to the temple is proof of that fact. The reader should keep in mind what was said previously about the elder Mosiah, mentioned in verse 12 of the Book of Omni. It will be remembered that the elder Mosiah and his followers came into the wilderness at God’s command and joined the Mantiites. As already pointed out, the Book of Mormon from Omni 12 to the end of the book is, with the exception of the Book of Ether, a record of this minority group.

**King Benjamin’s Oration.**

In Chapter 2 we are told how King Benjamin had a tower built in the
temple precincts so that he could speak to his people. However, it was found that his people were too numerous for them all to hear well; therefore, it was arranged that those who could not hear him had written copies of his oration distributed to them (2:8).

The oration of Benjamin is really the only example of oration in the Book of Mormon. It is found in Mosiah 2:9-3:27; 4:4-30.

It is highly improbable that Benjamin had received much instruction in the making of sermons or speeches. What ability he had in youth had probably been improved through long experience as a teacher of his people and as their king. Most of his speeches were doubtless of a religious nature, if we may judge the spirit of the man in his last formal speech.

The oration is remarkable in many respects. It is characterized by dignity, simplicity, sincerity, and a warm religious feeling. It seems also to have been delivered with force and persuasiveness. The combined powers of Benjamin's religious authority and kingly office undoubtedly gave his words great prestige among the people. The oration seems to the writer to fall into three logical divisions: (1) Mosiah 2:9-41; (2) Mosiah 3:7-21; Mosiah 4:4-30.

In the first part of the first division Benjamin enjoined upon his people the necessity of requiring service to each other and to God. In fact, “service” is the watchword of this part of the oration. The king began by skillfully pointing out how he had labored without stint to serve his people and his God (vs. 11-18). The rulers of all nations, not to mention the servants of the people everywhere, would do well to read Benjamin's words and take them to heart. They are part of the glory which is the Book of Mormon's. Let us reproduce at this point one of the great things which he said:

"Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:16, 17; italics ours.)

Benjamin proceeded to remind the multitude that if he merited any thanks from them, how much more ought they to thank God their heavenly King (Mosiah 2:19). Verse 19 is a transition. The king now pointed out that if his people would praise God and serve Him with their whole soul they would still be unprofitable servants. Mosiah 2:20-22 is a great passage, and deserves our careful notice.

In the remainder of this division Benjamin reminded the people of his age and approaching death. He proclaimed to them the ascent of his son Mosiah to the throne and bespoke for him their loyalty and support. He also warned his people in a most solemn manner of the perils of transgressing the commandments of God. The King wanted to make sure that the blood of no person would stain his garments for lack of proper instruction (Mosiah 2:27).

Benjamin wisely reserved for the second division of his oration a revelation of the highest importance. Its effects upon the people were bound to be impressive. Sometime before the delivery of his address an angel had appeared to Benjamin with tidings of great joy, which he told the king might be shared with the people (3:2-4). The message of the heavenly visitor concerned the coming of the Savior. His work in mortality, His death and resurrection, and the
subsequent effects upon mankind. The angel had also explained the reasons for the giving of the law of Moses, the power of the atoning blood of Christ, in saving children who die in infancy, and the necessity of men becoming meek, humble, patient, and full of love, if they are to be saved. The divine messenger had concluded by pointing out that his words would stand as a bright testimony at the judgment day, a day in which every man would be judged according to his works, whether good or evil (3:22).

The multitude fell to the earth on hearing the angel’s words as delivered by King Benjamin. The sacred record says that “they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God...” (Mosiah 3:2).

Benjamin must have been pleased with the interruption, for he knew that the words which he was delivering were having a profound effect on his audience. And the message of the angel was like a letter from the Christ assuring his people that he would come in due time as the prophets had prophesied.

The third division of King Benjamin’s oration consists of the words which he uttered after the people of his audience had received the angel’s ords and a comforting and peaceful testimony from the Spirit of the Lord. The speaker took advantage of the unusual opportunity afforded him by the testimony which the people had received to drive home to all the obligation of keeping the Lord’s commandments. Salvation, he pointed out, comes only through the atonement of Christ (4:4-5). Benjamin then exhorted his people to believe in God, to believe in His wisdom, power, goodness, and greatness. He advised his people to keep in mind what unworthy creatures they were and to humble themselves by calling on God’s name daily and to stand steadfastly in the faith. He advised them that if they did this they would always rejoice and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of their sins. Moreover, they would not have a tendency to injure one another or to do one another harm, but would find it possible to live peacefully and to render every man according to that which is his due. He advised his people in a practical way not to suffer their children to go hungry or naked, but to teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness, to love one another, and to serve one another. (Mosiah 4:9-15.)

Benjamin’s words reveal a great religious soul, and we believe that his advice is worthy of a high place in the scriptures. He concluded his speech by emphasizing the need of succoring and administering to those in need. Some of his words, simple as they are, deserve to be framed and memorized. We call the reader's attention especially to 4:16-19.

Every just and righteous person must recognize that Benjamin was a great man and that his oration, judged by religious standards, was a noble achievement. Was the oration successful? Did it change the people in any way as a good oration should? Even the King was anxious to know, and he sent among his people to find out. They universally cried out their belief in the words which he had spoken (see Mosiah 5:1). Not only did they believe, but they consented to enter into a covenant with
Christ to keep His commandments and become His spiritual sons and daughters. Benjamin now told them that they should be called by the name of Christ (Mosiah 5:6-12). This was the name which the king had said, prior to his oration, that he would give his people (Mosiah 1:11, 12). It is the belief of the writer that King Benjamin's oration is one of the highlights of the Book of Mormon, and deserves more careful study than it has heretofore had.

THE DISCOVERY OF ZENIFF'S PEOPLE (CHAPTERS 7, 8). Chapters 7 and 8 of Mosiah form a natural literary division of the book, because in them we learn about an expedition which was sent by Mosiah to find the lost people of Zeniff. This expedition was led by a man whose name was Ammon. He and his men, sixteen in all, wandered for forty days in the wilderness before discovering a strange city; outside the walls of this city, Ammon and some of his men were taken prisoner by a king whose name was Limhi. After two days in prison, Ammon was permitted to speak to the king. He told who he was and informed Limhi that he had set out from the land of Zarahemla in an endeavor to find the people of Zeniff. Limhi, who was the king over Zeniff's people, was overjoyed to hear Ammon's story, and revealed to him that he was the leader of the lost people. Limhi told Ammon that his people were in bondage to the Lamanites and revealed to him the history of the people since they left the land of Zarahemla in the days of King Benjamin (see Omni 27-30). In Chapter 8 Limhi tells how he and his people had endeavored on occasion to find the people of Zarahemla but were unable to do so. In fact, the king had sent forty-three of his men into the wilderness for that very purpose. After wandering a long time, they had come to a land that had been covered with bones of men, of beasts, and of ruins of ancient buildings. Apparently the ancient inhabitants had been slain by the sword. Among other things found by Limhi's men were twenty-four plates of gold, covered with strange engravings. King Limhi and his people were very eager to know the contents of these records but were unable to translate them. For that reason he asked Ammon whether he knew ancient languages. Ammon told him that he could not translate them but that he knew of a man who could, because he had an instrument through which he could look and translate by the power of God. He had reference, of course, to the fact that King Mosiah had in his possession the 'interpreters' or the Urim and Thummim as we know them. Ammon went on to explain that this king was a seer and that a seer is greater than a prophet. Mosiah was therefore a revelator and a prophet also; a greater gift no man could have except he possessed the power of God (8:13-16).

SOME NOTES CONCERNING THE RECORD OF ZENIFF'S PEOPLE IN CHAPTERS 9-24. As we have noticed before, the account of King Mosiah's reign is interrupted by the insertion of the record of the people of Zeniff. This record is contained in Chapters 9-24 of the Book of Mosiah. The record of Zeniff may roughly be broken down into the following divisions:

A. Zeniff's personal memoirs. (Chs. 9, 10.)

B. The wicked administration of King Noah and his corrupt priests. (Chs. 11-17.)

C. Alma, convert of the prophet Abinadi, preaches secretly; departs into wilderness. (Ch. 18.)
D. An account of Gideon, King Noah, the wicked priests of Noah; the end of Zeniff’s record. (Chs. 19-22.)

E. Account of Alma’s people from time they were driven into wilderness until they find their way to Zarhemla. (Chs. 23, 24)

ZENIFF’S PERSONAL MEMOIRS. Little need be said about Zeniff’s personal account found in Chapters 9 and 10. It would appear that Zeniff was a zealous man who brought a group of people from the land of Zarhempla into the wilderness in an attempt to find the land of their fathers’ inheritance. He tells how he and his people began to repair the walls of the city of Lehi-Nephi and of the city of Shilom. He also relates the circumstances under which his people came again into contact with the Lamanites so that there began to be wars and contentions. On one occasion the Lamanites came suddenly against his people, but since God answered their prayers, the Nephites were able to slay the Lamanites and drive them out of the land. In Chapter 10, Zeniff tells how he exhorted his people to put their trust in God and withstand the Lamanites face to face. Through his leadership the people were able to retain their freedom and liberty. In the last verse of Chapter 10, Zeniff writes that he conferred the kingdom upon one of his sons. So ends his record.

LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS, THE PROPHET ABINADI VERSUS KING NOAH AND HIS PRIESTS. In Chapters 11-17 of the Book of Mosiah, we have a natural literary division which deals with the wicked administration of King Noah, the son of Zeniff. He and his corrupt priests spurned the teachings of God and committed all manner of wickedness and licentiousness among his people. Noah and his henchmen taxed heavily the products and property of the people. They took to themselves many wives and concubines which, as we learned in the Book of Jacob, was against the counsel and advice of God (Jacob 2: 27, 30). Moreover, the king took the resources of the people and built elegant and spacious buildings for himself and his wicked priests; thus they lived in luxury at the expense of the taxpayers (Mosiah 11:1-11).

In the midst of this wickedness, there came Abinadi, a courageous prophet who opposed Noah by preaching the true meaning of the law of Moses and of the mission of Christ. Abinadi may be spoken of as the Amos of the Book of Mormon. He did not hesitate in the face of opposition and difficulties to denounce King Noah and all his works. Abinadi told the people that unless they repented of their wickedness and whoredoms, the Lord would deliver them into the hands of their enemies and they would be brought into bondage and be afflicted (11:21). But King Noah and his people, blinded as they were, hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi and attempted to take him (11:29). After a time, Abinadi was cast into prison, and the false priests of Noah sought to question him, in order to confound him and to bring him into disrepute before the people. Nevertheless, Abinadi answered them boldly and confounded them in all of their words (12:9-19). He quoted the scriptures to them and taught them the law of Moses and the Ten Commandments. He told them that the salvation of man could not come by the law of Moses alone. It was expedient that they should keep the law of Moses for the time being, but there should come a time when it
should no longer be expedient to keep the law. Salvation did not come by that law alone, and were it not for the atonement of Christ, which should be wrought out in time to come, the people must unavoidably perish (12:31-13:28). Abinadi taught that the children of Israel were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity and slow to remember the Lord their God. Consequently, the Lord gave unto them a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were instructed to observe strictly from day to day in order to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty toward Him. The Prophet pointed out that Moses himself understood the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem His people (13:33). He then quoted the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which is a reference to the coming of Christ and His work (14). He explained this scripture and told the wicked people of King Noah about the resurrection and about how the bands of death would be broken by Christ. He told them that the Lord would redeem no people who died in their sins, that those who willfully rebelled against God and failed to keep his commandments would have no part in the first resurrection (15). Chapter 16 is very important because Abinadi continues his prophecies concerning Christ, the resurrection, and judgment. He told the people that the time would come when all nations should see the salvation of God and confess that God’s judgments are just. The wicked were to be cast out and should have cause to howl, weep, and gnash their teeth; the Lord would not redeem them. He explained that had Christ not come into the world (speaking as though He had already come) there could be no redemption, for except Christ rose from the dead and broke the bands of death, the grave would have won the victory and death would have its sting (16:6, 7). The prophet taught his people—and us—that in the resurrection this mortal shall put on immortality, and then we shall be brought to stand before the bar of God to be judged of Him according to our works. If our works are good, we shall come forth in the resurrection of endless life and happiness; if they are evil, we shall experience a resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil. Abinadi made it plain that the Lord will extend His arms and mercy to all who repent of their iniquities, but those who will not change their pattern of life have reason to tremble, since only through Christ can they be saved.

When Abinadi had finished his words, the king commanded the priests to take him and put him to death. Then a certain young man by the name of Alma, who had been convinced that Abinadi was correct in his preaching, began to plead with the King not to be angry with the Prophet, but suffer him to depart in peace. However, the King was more angry than ever, and commanded that Alma be cast out from among them; he even sent his servants after him to slay him. The courageous young man was able to conceal himself so that they did not find him, but Abinadi was taken by the king’s guards, bound, and put into prison (17:3-5). After three days they brought him out and told him that unless he recalled his words he would be put to death. Abinadi told them, however, that he would not recall his words and that they would stand as a testimony against the people. King Noah, coward that he was, was about to release him because he feared his words, but the priests reviled the Prophet and stirred the
King up to such anger that he delivered Abinadi to be slain. He was cruelly condemned to death by fire, but before the flames overcame him he predicted retribution upon his enemies; he predicted that God would execute vengeance upon those who had had anything to do with his death. The prophet had foretold Noah’s death by fire on a previous occasion (12:3). Having told these words, Abinadi fell, suffering death by fire. He, like so many other prophets, sealed his words with his blood.

ALMA, THE CONVERT OF ABINADÍ, BEGINS TO PREACH SECRETLY. Chapter 18 of Mosiah forms a little literary unit of itself. It seems to have been inserted in the record because it gives an understanding of certain unusual historical facts. After the death of Abinadi, Alma preached secretly among the people. He taught concerning the resurrection, and the redemption which Christ should make. Apparently quite a number of people came to him secretly and were instructed by him. Finally, he went forth to a place called Mormnon where there was a fountain of pure water; here he began to baptize. It would appear that authority had been given to him by Abinadi, although the record does not expressly say so. He baptized about 204 people. Verse 17 of this chapter states that whoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to His Church. This is the first time in the Book of Mormon that any mention is made of a formal church organization among the Nephites. It is true that from the days of Lehi to the days of Abinadi there had been many prophets, prophets who had the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood. Nevertheless, there seems to have been no formal church organization until the time of Alma (see Mosiah 29:47). This young leader proceeded to ordain priests, one for every fifty of the people who belonged to the Church. Alma and his converts were forced to flee into the wilderness before King Noah and his priests, who endeavored to find them and put them to death. When they fled from their persecutors they numbered about 450 souls (18:33).

WHAT HAPPENED TO NOAH AND HIS WICKED PRIESTS. In Chapters 19-22 of Mosiah, we have a prophetic account of how retribution came upon Noah and his wicked priests as Abinadi had predicted. As one reads these chapters, he gets the impression that they were written deliberately to show the reader how Abinadi’s prophecies came true. A valiant man by the name of Gideon led an insurrection against King Noah, and was in a fair way to succeed when the King noticed that the Lamanites were coming into the land. Indeed most of the people were taken captive by the Lamanites, but King Noah and his priests fled into the wilderness. Even Noah’s son Limhi was taken captive. The Lamanites consented to spare the lives of the Nephites on condition that they would pay a tribute of one-half of all they possessed (19:15). Limhi took the place of his father and somehow or other managed to keep peace with the Lamanites for two years.

Chapter 19:19, 20 relates how certain Nephites, who had been taken captive by the Lamanites, in their anger sought out King Noah and put him to death by fire. Thus came about part of the retribution prophesied by Abinadi.

The priests of King Noah managed to flee into the wilderness and for a time escaped retribution. These priests succeeded in abducting a number of the daughters of the Lamanites who came out to dance in a
place called Shemlon (Mosiah 20:1-5). As a result of this abduction the Nephites were accused by the Lamanites, but after considerable fighting, King Limhi pacified the Lamanites by telling them that it was probable that the priests of King Noah had taken away their daughters (20:6-26).

In accordance with Abinadi's other predictions, the Nephites found themselves in great affliction because of their bondage to the Lamanites. However, through the prayers of the people, the Lord softened the hearts of their enemies and they found it easier to submit to the yoke. Nevertheless, they cried to the Lord to deliver them from bondage, but the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their previous iniquities (Mosiah 21:15). King Limhi was a just man, and he commanded his people to take care of the widows and their children, that they might not perish of hunger. When Ammon and his men discovered Limhi and his people, as we have recounted earlier, they jointly planned to throw off the Lamanite yoke. Chapter 22 relates how, at Gideon's suggestion, the Lamanites were plied with wine and made drunk. The captive people were thereby enabled to escape out of the city by night while their guards slumbered; and under the leadership of Ammon and his men they came back to the land of Zarahemla.

The obvious lesson of these chapters is that God will not be mocked; when His people fail to serve Him they often find themselves deep in trouble. But after their sincere repentance, the Lord usually listens to his children and delivers them from their bondage.

**ALMA AND HIS PEOPLE FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO ZARAHEMLA.** We found in Chapter 18 a short account of how Alma and his immediate followers were forced to flee into the wilderness from King Noah and his guards. In Chapters 23 and 24 the sacred record returns to the history of Alma and his fellow refugees and tells of their wanderings from the time that they fled from King Noah until they returned back to the land of Zarahemla. It appears that Alma and his people fled for eight days into the wilderness and reached a very beautiful and pleasant land where there was plenty of pure water (23:3, 4). (Alma very carefully taught his people how to serve God and to keep His commandments) He reminded them of the oppression of King Noah and his priests and told them how iniquity had brought them into bondage. He also reminded his people of the fact that through their righteousness they had been delivered out of the land of King Noah and his people. Alma became known as their High Priest, since he was the founder of their church (23:16). The record goes on to relate that none received authority to preach or to teach unless it were given him from God. The priests and teachers watched carefully over the people so that there was no iniquity among them (23:18). They called the beautiful land in which they lived the land of Helam. There they prospered until an army of Lamanites suddenly came upon them. Among these Lamanites was Amulon, who was a leader of King Noah's wicked priests (23:32). He had been found by the Lamanites who had pursued after King Limhi when he departed for the land of Zarahemla. The king of the Lamanites who had surrounded the land of Helam permitted Amulon to have jurisdiction over Alma and his people in the land (Mosiah 24:8). Amulon proceeded to persecute Alma and his followers. Through the faith:
of Alma's people, however, the Lord made their burdens light and eventually made it possible for them to escape from their persecutors. The Lord commanded Alma to have his people gather together their flocks and their grain so that they could flee out of the land. He then caused a deep sleep to come upon all of the Lamanite taskmasters. While they slept, Alma and his people departed into the wilderness, and after twelve days travel found their way back into the land of Zarahemla. There they were received with great rejoicing by King Mosiah and his people (24:25).

Here again, in the account of Alma and his people, we may learn a great religious lesson. Alma's people had been righteous. Consequently, when they were subject to the persecutions of Amulon and his henchmen, the Lord eased their burdens and made it possible for them to hold up well under their afflictions. When men and women serve God, they seem to be joyful and happy, and much better able to face difficulties. In our day we may well take this lesson to heart. In the midst of chaos and a troubled world, we may find our way easier and our tasks lighter to bear if we serve God and keep His commandments as did Alma and his people.

WHAT MOSIAH DID WHEN ZENIFF'S PEOPLE RETURNED. In Chapter 25 of Mosiah is a very interesting account of what happened when Mosiah assembled his people. He divided them into two bodies: the Zulekites were in one body and the Nephites, including the people of Zeniff and the people of Alma, were in the other. Mosiah was so interested in the accounts of the people of Zeniff that he read or caused to be read, he records of Zeniff and of Alma to the whole assemblage. The people were amazed when they learned what had happened to their brethren during the years that they were separated from the people of Zarahemla. Mosiah, prophet-king and seer, must have been especially interested in the account of how God in His wisdom and mercy had delivered His people out of bondage and had made it possible for them to return to the main body of the Nephites. The king recognized the greatness of Alma as a church leader. He commissioned him to preach to all of the people and establish branches of the Church throughout the lands of Zarahemla (25:19). Moreover, as a seer he gave Alma power to ordain priests and teachers over every branch. In fact, Mosiah finally placed Alma in authority over the whole Church (26:8). At least seven branches were established in Zarahemla alone. The record tells us that whosoever were desirous to take upon themselves the name of Christ did join the churches of God and were called the people of God (25:23, 24).

The revelations of the Lord were given to Alma so that he was able to deal with the spiritual difficulties of his people (26:14-23). He baptized many and taught them the provisions of the gospel as well as of the laws of Moses which the people were required to keep.

THE MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF THE SONS OF ALMA AND MOSIAH. Chapter 27 of Mosiah is especially noteworthy because it tells of a great spiritual incident in which the sons of Alma and Mosiah were converted to the Church. It seems a strange fact that the sons of Alma and of Mosiah, of all men, were persecuting the Church and doing all that they could do to
hinder the work of God. Even good men are not always able to keep their sons in the way of righteousness. It is possible that because of the great services which Alma and Mosiah had rendered to the work of God, He was merciful to His two servants and thus permitted their sons to receive a special testimony of His work. This chapter corresponds fairly well to the chapter in the Book of Acts which tells how Paul was converted while on the way to Damascus (Acts 9).

As the younger Alma and his companions, the four sons of Mosiah, were going about secretly seeking to destroy the Church and to lead the people of the Lord astray, an angel of God appeared to them and spoke to them as with a voice of thunder, which shook the earth upon which they stood. So great was their astonishment, that they fell to the earth. The angel called upon the younger Alma to account for his persecuting the Church of God (27:13). He reminded him that the Lord had heard the prayers of His people and also the prayers of his father, the elder Alma, and for that purpose he had come to convince him of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith. The younger Alma was commanded to go on his way and to persecute the Church no more. He and his four friends again fell to the earth, so great was their astonishment. They had indeed beheld an angel of God, who had caused the earth to tremble. Alma became dumb and so weak that he was carried helpless before his father (27:19). The elder Alma rejoiced because he knew that only through God’s power had his son been made so weak and helpless. After the space of two days and nights, Alma received his strength, and he stood up and bade those around him to be of good comfort. He told how the Lord had manifested to him His displeasure and how his own soul had been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. From that day forth, the younger Alma and the four sons of Mosiah—Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—began to go about in the Church preaching and zealously striving to undo the evil work that they had accomplished earlier (27:35).

This marvelous incident must have been a great testimony to the Nephites. The young men involved henceforth gave all of their service to the Church, and spent the rest of their lives in the work of the ministry.

King Mosiah permitted his sons to go and preach to the Lamanites. He did this only after he had inquired of the Lord. The Lord told him that it would be all right to let his sons go among the Lamanites, because many would believe on their words and have eternal life. Moreover he promised Mosiah that their lives would be delivered out of the hands of the Lamanites (28:7). In our discussion of the Book of Alma we shall deal with the missionary labors of these four sons of Mosiah at greater length.

The younger Alma did so well in the ministry that King Mosiah delivered into his custody all of the sacred records and relics which had been entrusted to him from the hands of King Benjamin (28:20). Before he did so, however, he proceeded to translate the twenty-four plates which Limhi’s men had found in the wilderness. Thus Mosiah and his people found out who these ancient people were. They found they were a people that had originally come from the Tower of Babel to this land, because of wickedness they were finally destroyed (28:17).
MOSIAH CHANGES THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE NEPHITES. Chapter 29 of the Book of Mosiah is notable for the fact that it tells how King Mosiah persuaded his people to give up their monarchical form of government and substitute in its place a government by judges freely elected by the people. Religiously, this is a great chapter because in it the king discoursed to his people about the rights of free agency which men and women should have; moreover, he instructed his people that they should have men to judge them who would keep the commandments of God and teach correct principles. He warned them that kings could cause great iniquity among the people and take away from them their liberty, which thing would not be so easy to do under a government by judges. He spoke these words to his people:

"For behold I say unto you, the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings; therefore their iniquities are answered upon the heads of their kings. And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land..." (29:31, 32.)

All of us should read these words soberly. We now have the privilege in this great land of ours to cast our votes for good men to govern the country. Like the Nephites, we should be anxious to see that all men have an equal chance in the eyes of the law in this land. We ought to take advantage of the opportunity given us to cast in our votes and decide whether righteous or evil men shall rule over us. In these days of severe regimentation among foreign nations, liberty and freedom should mean something to us. The great teachings of the Book of Mormon respecting good government should be appreciated by all thinking persons in this day.

The younger Alma, who may be spoken of as the Paul of the Book of Mormon, was appointed to be the first Chief Judge under the new form of government. He was also the High Priest, since his father had conferred that office upon him and had given him charge concerning all of the affairs of the Church (29:42).

The death of King Mosiah, the great seer and prophet, is recorded in the forty-sixth verse of this chapter. The last verse (47) records the end of the days of the elder Alma "who was the founder of their church."

It is interesting to notice the express mention of Alma the elder as the "founder" of the Nephite church. He was kept in honorable remembrance because of his activity in building up the Church among the Nephite people.
The great characters of the Book of Mosiah are obviously Benjamin, Mosiah, Abinadi the prophet, the elder Alma, and Alma the Younger. The great characteristics of the younger Alma are more fully brought out in the book which bears his name; Benjamin's oration is one of the spiritual gems of the Book of Mormon. All of these men are noble characters and portray a vital and dynamic idealism of value for men in all walks of life. They all exhibit a love for righteousness, for freedom and liberty, and for the spirit of service to their fellowmen. Mosiah is to be distinguished also by the fact that he urged and successfully brought about a vital change in the form of Nephite government.

No special reasons are assigned for the writing of this book; it finds its justification in the way that history always vindicates the acts and words of great men.
THE LITERARY STRUCTURE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF ALMA. The Book of Alma is by far the largest one in the Book of Mormon. It contains sixty-three chapters and about one hundred sixty-five printed pages. The book is named after the younger Alma though the abridgment of his record occupies only the first forty-four chapters. The abridgment of Helaman's record is found in Chapters 45-62, and that of Shiblon's occupies part of Chapter 63. Alma thus breaks down into three logical divisions according to its authorship.

The Book of Alma contains an unusually large number of superscriptions. The reader should keep in mind that these are part of the original text. They will be found printed in italics over the following chapters: 1, 5, 7, 9, 17, 21, 36, 38, 39, 45. The fact that they are found over these chapters and no others in the book would seem to indicate differences in authorship. If Mormon the editor was alone responsible for the superscriptions, why didn't he write some over certain chapters of Helaman's part of the book? Why do the chapters relating to Alma's work alone have these superscriptions? Probably Alma was responsible for them.

Some of the main types of literature in the Book of Alma are historical narrative, didactic exposition, songs of praise, prayers, prophecy of doom, war epistles, and patriarchal admonition.

We suggest that the book be studied according to the following scheme, based on authorship:

I. The abridgment of Alma the Younger's record. (Chs. 1-44.)

II. The abridgment of the record of Helaman, the son of Alma the Younger. (Chs. 45-62.)

III. The abridgment of the record of Shiblon, brother of Helaman. (Ch. 63.)

I. THE EVENTS OF ALMA'S JUDGESHIP (CHAPTERS 1 TO 4). After King Mosiah had changed the Nephite form of government, the honor of being the first chief judge fell to the younger Alma. This office he filled with distinction for nine years in addition to being the High Priest over the Church. Because of iniquity in the Church, Alma finally decided to give up the judgeship and devote himself exclusively to the ministry. It will be logical and convenient to study first of all Chapters 1-4, which deal with the events of the years of Alma's judgeship.

The Book of Alma opens with a tribute to the memory of King Mosiah: good men are a benediction to the race; the good that men do lives long in the hearts of their fellows. Concerning Mosiah the record states:

"... king Mosiah having gone the way of all the earth, having warred a good warfare, walking uprightly before God, leaving none to reign in his stead; nevertheless he had established laws, and they were acknowledged by the people; therefore they were obliged to abide by the laws which he had made." (Alma 1:1.)

This is a simple but effective tribute to a great man.

We may notice here some words of Alma, which he uttered when pronouncing judgment of death upon Nehor, a Nephite criminal. Nehor established a church with tenets of
his own, and attempted to force his views upon the people. In so doing he slew Gideon, an old and greatly respected man of God. Alma said to Nehor:

"... thou art not only guilty of priestcraft, but hast endeavored to enforce it by the sword; and were priestcraft to be enforced among this people it would prove their entire destruction." (Alma 1:12.)

This passage is of great importance. It affirms the right of men to believe as they choose, providing they do not injure their neighbors in doing so. Alma's pronouncement to Nehor should be repeated for the benefit of men everywhere. Religious intolerance and bigotry need to be battled in every age.

The death of Nehor did not put an end to priestcraft among the Nephites. Verses 16-33 of Chapter 1 tell of the troubles of the Nephite Church and its struggle against pride, inequality, and persecution. The Church generally seems to have accomplished its righteous purposes despite opposition. Priests, teachers, and people worked diligently together. Notice the following significant statement:

"... the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength." (Alma 1:26.)

The Book of Mormon is notable for its stress on equality and liberty among men.

The people of the Church imparted of their substance to the poor, sick, and afflicted. The Church prospered because of its steadiness. (Alma 1:29.) We notice with interest that the people did prosper and become far more wealthy than those who did not belong to their church." (1:31.) Alma pointed out by way of contrast the unenviable state of those who did not belong to the Church (1:32).

Chapters 2 and 3 of Alma are concerned with the dissension brought among the Nephites by a cunning, worldly man by the name of Amlici. This man sought to become king, and in so doing brought about a terrible loss of life. Because of a lust for power, one man caused the destruction of thousands of innocent persons (see Alma 3:26). Unfortunately, history has repeated itself in this manner for thousands of years. As Latter-day Saints, we may take the lesson to heart and actively promote peace and good will among men.

While we shall not consider the details of this Amlicite rebellion, it may be well to dwell upon the behavior and character of Alma during the uprising. Alma personally led his armies in battle. Finally, he met Amlici face to face in a mighty struggle. The sacred record says:

"... Alma, being a man of God, being exercised with much faith, cried, saying: O Lord, have mercy and spare my life, that I may be an instrument in thy hands to save and preserve this people." (Alma 2:30.)

Alma then overcame Amlici with the sword.

It should be noticed that Alma was a man of great personal courage. As a religious man he did not leave others to face danger and avoid it himself. When fighting Amlici, he asked God's protection in order to be of service to his people. Alma was truly a man with a great character.

The end of the Amlicite rebellion saw a marked upswing in the fortunes of the Nephite Church. Thousands were added to it by baptism. But the prosperity which followed caused many members to be lifted up with pride. These haughty people began to persecute their less fortu-
nate brethren. The wickedness of the Church, we are told, “was a great stumbling-block to those who did not belong to the church; and thus the church began to fail in its progress.” (Alma 4:10.) Here is a lesson we may all consider. The Church today will progress and move the hearts of men when its members preach by example and not by precept only.

So great were the persecutions heaped upon the humble followers of God, and so great was the inequality among the people, that Alma began to be very sorrowful. He was so moved by the iniquity among the people that he determined to give up his judgeship in order to devote his whole time to the ministry. Nephihah was appointed to be the chief judge in his stead. It will thus be observed how conscientious Alma was in the observance of his spiritual duties.

THE MISSIONARY LABORS OF ALMA AND AMULEK (Chapters 5-16). ALMA’S LABORS IN ZARAHEMLA. When Alma relinquished his judgeship he immediately proceeded to preach in Zarahemla and other cities and villages throughout the land. He began with Zarahemla and then journeyed to Gideon. From Gideon he returned home to rest a season, after which he visited Melek, Ammonihah, and Sidom.

In his address to the people of the Church in Zarahemla, Alma began by reminding them how his father's followers had been delivered from bondage by the mercy and power of God. Then he asked the people whether they had sufficiently retained in remembrance the captivity of their fathers and God's mercy and long-suffering towards them. The words and work of the great prophet Abinadi were recalled. Alma told how his words had wrought a mighty change in the hearts of many of those who heard him. Then applying the lesson, Alma asked his hearers:

"... have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you? ..." (Alma 5:14, 15.)

Alma continued by asking the people, whether in the judgment day, they could look up to God with a pure heart and clean hands. He pointed out that no man could be saved unless his garments were washed white and purified through the blood of Him who should come to redeem His people from their sins. The Prophet asked whether his audience was blameless, humble, and stripped of envy and pride. He inquired whether any made a mock of his brother or persecuted him. Then he denounced the workers of iniquity and called upon them to repent. It is important for us to call attention to the fact that Alma explained that God's arms of mercy are extended toward all sinners who repent. The invitation of God is unto all men to eat of the bread of life and drink of the waters of life freely. The prophets of the Book of Mormon were not prophets of doom only. As servants of God they predicted the doom of the wicked, but only when the latter had refused the invitation of the Almighty to forsake their old ways and tread a new path. It is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Nephite record to portray God's love for man. It breathes a spirit of love, tolerance, and charity for all men.

Alma emphasized to his audience that the Good Shepherd called them. Then he said:
"... if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye? Behold, I say unto you, that the devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold... if a man bringeth forth good works he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd, and he doth follow him; but whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil, for he hearkeneth unto his voice, and doth follow him." (Alma 6:39, 41.)

The Prophet bore his testimony to the effect that God, through the revelations of the Holy Spirit, had called him to cry repentance to the people (Alma 5:43-51). He then warned against pride and against their wearing costly apparel to the embarrassment of less fortunate brethren. Finally, he called upon the people to separate themselves from the wicked and hearken unto the good shepherd, in order that their names might be written in the book of life (Alma 5:57-60).

The efforts of Alma in Zarahemla seem to have been somewhat successful, as Chapters 6:1-6 and 7:4 show.

ALMA'S MISSION TO THE CITY OF GIDEON. He then proceeded to the people in the valley of Gideon and took up his labors there (6:7,8). Here he began to preach about the coming of the Redeemer: that He should be born of Mary, a precious and chosen vessel; that He would suffer pain, afflictions, and temptations of every kind (7:1-11). Last of all, the Christ would take death upon Himself in order to loose its bands from His people (7:12). Alma then advised the people to repent and be born again; otherwise they could not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Those who kept the commandments of God would inherit eternal life according to the testimony of the Spirit within him. The Prophet then testified that the people of Gideon were not in the state of spiritual decline which had been true of the inhabitants of Zarahemla. He entreated his hearers to be faithful in words which should be quoted:

"And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive. And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works." (Alma 7:23, 24.)

This statement includes a great amount of wonderful spiritual advice. After giving it, Alma blessed the people and returned home (Alma 7:25-8:1).

ALMA'S MINISTRY IN MELEK AND AMMONIHAH. After resting in his home at Zarahemla, Alma departed and went over into the land of Melek. Here he preached to the people "according to the holy order of God" and began to teach the people throughout the land. Apparently he had great success, because the sacred record mentions the fact that people came to him from all parts of the land to be baptized. We may surmise that the people of Melek were in general as righteous and diligent as Alma had found the people in the land of Gideon.

He then departed on a three-day journey to the north and came to the city of Ammonihah. We are told that the people of this city were steeped in iniquity and withstood his words. They spit upon him, reviled him, and cast him out of the city (8:13). He therefore took his journey towards the city of Aaron. While he was on his way, the angel of the Lord who had appeared to him at the time he was converted appeared again and
delivered to him a message. He commanded him for his faithfulness and then commanded him to return to the city of Ammonihah and preach again to the people of that city. The angel commanded him to warn them that unless they repented they would be destroyed. The Prophet therefore hastened back. As he was entering the city, he met a man and asked him for something to eat. Providentially this man had had a vision, and the angel who had appeared to him in the vision had told him to receive a certain man who should come into the city (8:20). The man, whose name was Amulek, therefore received Alma into his home. He gave him food to eat, and Alma made known unto him who he was and the mission for which he had been sent. According to Alma 8:27, the two were together many days before they began to preach to the people. Finally, the Lord sent word to Alma to go forth with Amulek to prophesy unto the people and call upon them to repent (8:29). The two went forth according to the commandment, and declared the word of God with much power, since both were filled with the Holy Ghost. Attempts were made to confine them in prisons, but because of the power of the Spirit which was with them, prisons could not hold them. This ability was given to them in order that the Lord might show forth His power in these two servants (8:31).

Chapters 9-14 of Alma contain the words which Alma and Amulek carried to the people of Ammonihah. Alma stood forth with great power and rebuked the people for their sins. He reminded them of God’s matchless power which had been with their forefathers, and of how except for His long-suffering toward them they would have been destroyed and perhaps consigned to a state of misery and woe. He refreshed the memories of the people about the philosophy which Lehi had expounded in Chapter 1 of Second Nephi to the effect that unless they kept God’s commandments they would not prosper in the land but would be cut off from the presence of the Lord (Alma 9:13). The Prophet said that it would be better for the Lamanites in the day of judgment than for the Nephites unless they repented. He told his audience that the Lamanites were ignorant because of the traditions of their fathers, but that the Nephites on the other hand had been blessed with the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation, the gift of speaking with tongues, the gift of preaching, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of translation. Under these conditions they should have exhibited the fruits of God’s blessings to them. Alma emphasized the fact that the Lord had sent him to visit his people and call them to repentance so that they would have no excuse. Not only that, but he declared that in the not distant future the Son of God should come and redeem those baptized unto repentance through faith on his name (9:27).

Unfortunately, Alma’s words did not produce a repentant spirit in the people; they were wroth with him and attempted to cast him into prison. However, the power of the Lord attended the prophet, and they were not able to do what they desired.

When Alma had finished, Amulek stood up to bear his testimony to the people. It seems that Amulek was a son of Giddonah, who was a descendant of Nephi, the son of Lehi. He was a man of considerable wealth and reputation among the people of Ammonihah (Alma 10:4). Amulek then bore testimony to the people how an angel of the Lord had appeared to him and had warned him about the coming of a prophet of the Lord, a holy man. The angel had said that the
Prophet had fasted many days because of the sins of the people and was very hungry. Therefore Amulek was to receive him into his house and feed him; in so doing he and his house would be blessed. Amulek testified that what he had seen in vision was literally fulfilled; and that Alma was the man in question. This testimony of Amulek created great astonishment among the people, who sought to trap him and his companion by their cunning devices and cast them into prison or slay them. The cunning lawyers among the people of Ammonihah attempted to question Amulek in order to make him contradict the words which he had spoken (10:16). However, through the Spirit Amulek knew what they were attempting to do. He therefore warned them and called them a wicked and perverse generation, and condemned the lawyers for their unrighteousness.

The sacred record mentions one of these lawyers, a man by the name of Zeezrom. This man was one of the foremost of those who were attempting to catch Amulek and Alma in their words. The text states that he was one of “the most expert among them, having much business to do among the people.” (10:31.) The record tells us, most significantly, that the object of these lawyers was to get gain. Chapter 11 makes known the customs of the Nephites in paying judges. It even discusses the Nephite coinage system, which fact is very interesting. Speaking of the Nephite lawyers we find the following:

Now, it was for the sole purpose to get gain, because they received their wages according to their employ, therefore, they did stir up the people to proofs, and all manner of disturbances and wickedness, that they might have more employ. Therefore they might get money according to the suits which were brought before them; therefore they did stir up the people against Alma and Amulek.” (Alma 11:20.)

These lawyers, according to modern terminology, would be called shysters. The record tells how Zeezrom questioned Amulek in his attempts to cause him to contradict himself (11:21). In fact, Zeezrom offered to bribe Amulek with money if he would deny the existence of a Supreme Being. Amulek, however, called him a “child of hell” and asked why he attempted to subject him to temptation. He then accused Zeezrom of loving lucre more than God. In short, Zeezrom was not successful in his attempt either to bribe Amulek or to cause him to contradict himself concerning the doctrines of the gospel. Amulek bore testimony that the Eternal Father would come into the world to redeem His people and take upon Himself the transgressions of those who believe on His name, and that none other would have eternal life except them. He pointed out that those who were willfully wicked would remain as though no redemption had been made by the Savior of the world; eventually they would have to stand before God to be judged according to their works. Through the death of Christ the bands of temporal death were to be loosed and all mankind raised from the dead. Men would have a bright recollection of all their guilt. Amulek taught also that the restoration would come to all, both old and young, and that not so much as a hair of the head would be lost. Everything would be restored to its perfect frame, and men would be brought and arraigned before the bar of Christ to be judged according to their works whether good or evil (11:44). The power of Amulek’s testimony began to have its effect upon Zeezrom; the record says that he began to tremble (Alma 11:46).

When Amulek had finished, Alma
began to bear testimony once more. He confirmed the words of Amulek, and began to speak directly to Zeezrom (Alma 12:1). He told Zeezrom that he had been caught in his lying, that he had lied not only to man but to God, for God knew all of his thoughts and had conveyed their substance unto Alma and Amulek through the Spirit. Alma testified to Zeezrom that his snares were those of the adversary which he had laid to catch this people and to bring them into subjection. Zeezrom began to tremble even more greatly than before, because he was convinced beyond doubt that it was the power of God manifested by these two preachers (12:7). He then began to inquire diligently concerning the kingdom of God and about the resurrection from the dead of which Amulek had preached. Alma obliged him by expounding the words which his companion had said unto the people. He explained that it is given unto many to know the mysteries of God. Nevertheless, they are laid under a strict commandment not to impart to people more than the Lord has granted unto the children of men (12:9). Moreover those who harden their hearts will receive a much lesser portion of God's word. He discussed with Zeezrom what was meant by being bound in the chains of hell. He also explained what was meant by the second death (12:16). Alma's words to Zeezrom astonished the people exceedingly; there was a chief ruler among them by the name of Antioniah who came forth and said to Alma:

"... What is this that thou has said, that man should rise from the dead and be changed from this mortal to an immortal state, that the soul can never die? What does the scripture mean which saith that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword on the east of the garden of Eden, lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever? And thus we see that there was no possible chance that they should live forever." (Alma 12:20, 21.)

These questions gave Alma an opportunity to explain the fall of Adam, the partaking of the forbidden fruit and the bringing of the gospel to mankind from the very beginning. He therefore taught to the people the plan of redemption and told them how it was possible for our first parents to be redeemed from their sins. He also spoke of the mercy which should be extended to mankind through the Only Begotten Son, who would make it possible for people to have a remission of sins.

The Prophet continued his discourse (Ch. 13) and explained how the holy order of the Son of God, that is to say the priesthood, was given to mankind; men were thus prepared to preach the gospel and bring to their fellows the truth concerning the mission of the Son of God. Alma told about the great High Priest, Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid tithes. He said some things about Melchizedek that are not disclosed in the present Book of Genesis. Melchizedek received the office of the High Priesthood according to the holy order of God, taught repentance unto his people, established peace in the land of Jerusalem in his days, and reigned under his father (13:18). Many High Priests were before him, and there were many afterward, but there were none greater than he. Therefore the scriptures have made particular mention of him. The Prophet went on to explain to Zeezrom and the people how the Lord, by the mouth of angels, declares the fundamentals of repentance unto all nations, and the glad tidings of great joy to be brought to them concerning the mission of Jesus.
Christ. He then called upon the people to humble themselves before the Lord and call on His holy name; he told them that they were to be led by the Holy Spirit so as to become humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering, having faith in the Lord and a hope of receiving eternal life (13:28, 29). In this way Alma spoke to the people.

When he had finished speaking, the people were all the more angry with the two preachers and were desirous of destroying them. They bound the two servants of God with strong cords and took them before the chief judge of the land (14:4). Here the people testified against them. But Zeezrom was so astonished at the words which had been spoken that his soul began to be harrowed up under a consciousness of his own guilt, and he felt the pains of hell. It must be said to the credit of Zeezrom that he was so wrought up in his mind that he began to cry unto the people in behalf of the two men who had been taken prisoner. He pointed out that he was guilty and that the two prophets were spotless before God. Then he began to plead for them, but the people reviled him in turn and asked him whether he also was possessed of the devil (14:7). They spit upon Zeezrom and cast him out as also they did those others who believed in the words spoken by Alma and Amulek. The people even sent men to cast stones at the believers. They brought forth the holy scriptures and set them on fire. Into the fire they cast the wives and children of those who believed. Amulek was greatly moved by the pains of the women and children who were being consumed in the fire, and he said to Alma, “How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames.” (14:10) But Alma replied to him that the Spirit constrained him from stretching forth his hand. He informed Amulek that the Lord made known to him that He would receive the unfortunate unto Himself in glory, that their blood would stand innocent before Him, and cry mightily against the guilty ones at the last day. Amulek was afraid that they would burn him and Alma as well, but Alma explained that their work was not yet done, that it would be against the will of the Lord for them to be burned at that time. The judge, who was after the order and faith of Nehor, came forth and smote Alma and Amulek as they stood bound, and then delivered them to the officers to be cast into prison. After they had spent three days in prison, lawyers, priests, and teachers came into the prison to see them; they questioned them concerning many things, but the two servants of God answered nothing (14:18). The officials departed but came on the morrow, and the judge again smote the prisoners. The jailers withheld food and water from the two servants of God and took their clothes from them so that they were naked. Finally, the chief judge stood before them again. He said to them, “If ye have the power of God deliver yourselves from these bands, and then we will believe that the Lord will destroy this people according to your words.” (14:24) All present went forth and smote the two prisoners, but when they had finished, the power of God was upon Alma and Amulek, and they rose to their feet and cried to God with such power that the prison shook, the walls fell, and all present were slain except the two missionaries. Both came forth out of the prison unharmed, because the Lord had granted them power according to their faith. When the people heard the great noise of destruction, and saw that Alma and
Amulek were coming forth, they fled “as a goat fleeth with her young from two lions.” (14:29.)

Chapter 15 discloses the fact that Alma and Amulek were commanded to depart from the city, which they did and came unto the land Sidom. There they found all of the people who had left the land of Ammonihah, that is to say, those who had been cast out and stoned because they believed in Alma’s words. The two missionaries then related to these people what had happened to their wives and their children, and also what had transpired concerning themselves. Alma found that Zeezrom lay sick at Sidom with a burning fever, which had been caused by the great tribulations of his mind resulting from his wickedness. He supposed that the two missionaries had been destroyed in prison.

Because of this and his many other sins, he felt the burning of a troubled conscience. When he heard that Alma and Amulek were present in Sidom, he sent a message to them with a request that they visit him. The two servants of the Lord went as requested and found him upon his bed, sick. Alma took him by the hand and asked him whether he believed in the power of Christ unto salvation. Zeezrom answered that he did and that he believed all the words that had been taught. He was then told that if he believed in the redemption of Christ he could be healed. When Zeezrom indicated that he did believe, Alma cried to the Lord, and through his mighty faith in God he healed the sick man. Zeezrom thereupon leaped to his feet and began to walk, to the great astonishment of all the people. The knowledge of his healing spread quickly throughout the land (15:11). Alma then baptized Zeezrom, who began from that time forth to preach to the people roundabout.

Alma was so successful in Sidom that he was able to establish a branch of the Church there. He consecrated priests and teachers in the land to baptize unto the Lord all who were desirous of repenting of their sins. Many joined the Church, but the people that remained in the land of Ammonihah continued as a hard-hearted and stiffnecked people and refused to repent of their sins. The unrepentant were of the profession of Nehor and did not believe in repentance from sin (15:15): The sacred record tells us that Amulek had forsaken all of his property and precious things; because he did so, he was rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and kindred. Having established the Church in Sidom, Alma took Amulek and came back to the land of Zarahemla, to his own home.

THE WICKED CITY OF AMMONIHAH DESTROYED BY THE LAMANITES. Following the events of which have been spoken, the sixteenth chapter of Alma tells of the eventual destruction of the city of Ammonihah as had been predicted. The Lamanites came suddenly into the land and began to slay the people and bring about the destruction of the city. Before the Nephites could raise a sufficient army, the wicked people of Ammonihah had been destroyed. Thus we see the fulfillment of prophecy in this record.

Through the power of God, the chief Nephite army commander, Zoroan, and his two sons, Lehi and Alma, were enabled to drive the Lamanites out of the Nephite lands. They inquired of Alma, who told them by the spirit of prophecy how to best the Lamanite armies. Nevertheless, the Lamanite armies were not driven out until every inhabitant that remained in the city of Ammonihah had been destroyed (16:9). Alma and
Amulek continued their preaching unto the people. They taught in temples, sanctuaries, and synagogues which had been built according to the manner of the Jews (16:13). The two preachers of righteousness taught about the eventual coming of the Lord, His sufferings and death, and His resurrection from the dead. The Church was established throughout all of the land. Thus these two men, as the record says, “got the victory over the devil.” (16:21.)

MISSIONARY LABORS OF THE SONS OF MOSIAH (CHAPTERS 17-26). Chapters 17-26 contain a series of faith-promoting narratives that do for the Book of Mormon what the narratives concerning Daniel and his brethren do for the Old Testament. These narratives deal with the missionary activities of the four sons of Mosiah—Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—among the Lamanites. The missionary experiences of these four men and their companions read almost like a series of miraculous events. The power of God was manifested in a remarkable way during their ministry among the benighted Lamanites.

When Alma was journeying from Gideon to the land of Manti on the south, he met Mosiah’s sons returning to Zarahemla from the field of their labors. Their mission among the Lamanites had lasted fourteen years (17:4). Alma extolled their spiritual growth by pointing out that they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. They had searched the scriptures diligently, in order to ascertain the word of God. In addition to this, they had obtained, through prayer and fasting, the spirit of prophecy and revelation. When they taught they did so with the power and authority of God (see 17:2, 3).

Here we have wonderful testimony to the value of the ministry as a means of spiritual growth. If our missionaries in the world would attend to their labors as sincerely and conscientiously as did the sons of Mosiah, what a work might be accomplished by them!

Chapters 17-20 are occupied mainly with the experiences of Ammon, the eldest son of Mosiah, while Chapters 21-25 tell more particularly about Aaron and his companion, Muloki. The other two brothers and their associates are mentioned only incidentally. Chapter 26 is an account of how Ammon glorieth in the Lord because of the great success which He had granted to Mosiah’s sons.

After reaching Lamanite territory, the sons of Mosiah parted company for different fields of labor. Ammon miraculously converted Lamoni, a Lamanite king, and practically all of his household in the land of Ishmael. Ammon was warned by the Lord to go to the land of Middoni and deliver his brother Aaron and companions from prison. King Lamoni went with him, and on the way they met with the Lamanite king’s father. Lamoni’s father was also a king with greater authority than his son. Despite the irascibility of the old king, Ammon and Lamoni succeeded in their mission.

The labors of Aaron and his brethren were wonderfully blessed also.

The net results of the labors of the sons of Mosiah and their brethren were as follows: The Lamanites in the lands of Ishmael, Middoni, Shilom, and Shemlon, and those in the cities of Lemuel, Shimnolom, and Nephi were converted to the Lord, and they laid down their weapons of war (23:8-13). They refused to take up arms against their brethren any more. We recommend that all who are interested in peace and the abolishment of war read Alma 24. This
chapter is a remarkable tribute to the Lamanite converts. The world today desperately needs such peacemakers.

It is no wonder that Ammon gloried in God (Ch. 26) because of the success which he and his brethren had in the ministry. They literally brought thousands to a knowledge of the Lord (see Alma 23:5; cf. D. & C. 18:10-16). The joy manifested in the Nephite record over the saving of these souls is a great tribute to its worth as a book for mankind. Every missionary or every prospective missionary is urged to carefully read Alma 17-26 and take to heart the lessons given therein.

**THE TEACHINGS OF CHAPTERS 27 TO 35.** Chapter 27 of Alma is notable because it relates that the Lamanites who had been converted by Ammon, his brothers, and friends were allotted the land of Jershon in which to live. The believing Lamanites would probably all have been slain by the Amalekites and others had they remained in their own lands and kept their oath never to take up arms again (27:1-4). Ammon, the indefatigable missionary, brought the converted Lamanites to the borders of Nephite territory and secured from his people permission to settle them in Jershon (27:22). Not only were the Lamanites given territory in which to live, but the Nephites provided military protection for them also (27:23, 24; see also Ch. 28). The writer considers this episode one of the most beautiful and touching in the Book of Mormon. Here is the spirit of brotherhood in action. If only the contending representatives to present peace parleys would show the disposition of those Nephites by making concessions to their brethren, some progress might be made toward lasting peace in the world.

Alma's words in Chapter 29 are a continuation of his record in Chapter 28. But it is a difficult matter to determine in Chapter 28—or is it back in Chapter 27—where Mormon leaves off abridging and begins to quote Alma's exact language. Surely Alma 28:7, 9, 10, 12 indicate Alma's words, because they are in the present tense, but what about verses 1-6? This is an interesting literary problem worth investigating for those interested in Mormon's methods of abridgment.

But turning our attention back to spiritual matters, let us observe two or three valuable religious lessons in Chapter 29. Alma wanted the power of an angel to cry repentance unto all people, but acknowledged this desire as an error (29:3, 7). Then he said:

"For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true." (Alma 29:8.)

This passage of scripture is interesting because of the fact that it shows that Alma contemplates a just God who gives to all of His children as much of His gospel as they can assimilate and understand. It would appear, if we interpret this scripture correctly, that when nations are unable to receive the gospel in its fulness, the Lord raises up men among them of superior understanding; these leaders teach their people that measure of the word of God which they can appreciate and put into practice. May we not say by way of illustration that such famous religious characters as Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, and others have been raised up among their people to teach them as much of the word of God as their people can put into practice? At any rate these words of Alma will bear study and meditation.
Another lesson which Alma teaches is this: he points out that he knows what the Lord has commanded him and glories in it; he does not glory of himself, but rather that he might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring souls unto repentance. Here are his exact words:

"...and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy." (Alma 29:9.)

Alma's joy consisted not in being uplifted in the pride of his heart, but rather in seeing what he could do for others. When he was able to bring some soul to repentance it gave him great joy, as it did the person whom he had taught (cf. D. & C. 18:10-16).

Another lesson of great interest and value lies in the fact that Alma was overjoyed not only by his own success in missionary work, but also in the success of his brethren. There are too many people who are envious of the success of others even when that success consists in bringing the souls of men to Christ. Let us repeat here some of the words of Alma:

"But I do not joy in my own success alone, but my joy is more full because of the success of my brethren, who have been up to the land of Nephi. Behold, they have labored exceedingly, and have brought forth much fruit; and how great shall be their reward! Now, when I think of the success of these my brethren my soul is carried away, even to the separation of it from the body, as it were, so great is my joy." (Alma 29:14-16.)

The Nephite record next tells about an episode concerning Korihor the Anti-Christ. It appears that this man came into the land of Zarahemla, Gideon, and other places and preached against those prophecies which concerned the coming of Christ. He told the people that they were laboring under a foolish and vain hope in looking for a Christ, for no man could know of that which was to come (Alma 30:13). He asserted that the prophecies were nothing but foolish traditions of the Nephite fathers. Not only did this man preach to the Nephites, but he also went over into the land of Jershon to preach to the converted Lamanites who were living in that country. The Lamanites, however, made short work of him, because they carried him before Ammon, who was the High Priest over the people. Ammon saw to it that he was cast out of the country, and he therefore came into the land of Gideon. He had little or no success there; finally Nephite authorities sent him to the land of Zarahemla, where he was brought before Alma and the chief judge. Earlier in Chapter 30 the sacred record points out that no law of the Nephites was given to operate against a man's belief (Alma 30:7-11). A man could believe what he chose, as long as he did not interfere with the rights of others. For that reason, Alma could do nothing about his unbelief or about his preaching except to ask him some questions. In the course of the questioning, Korihor denied that there was a God. He also denied the Christ. In consequence of this, Alma rebuked him severely, and told him that he was possessed of a lying spirit and that he had cast off the spirit of God so that it had no place in him (30:42). Korihor then asked Alma for a sign in order to be convinced that there was a God. Alma, however, rebuked him because only an adulterous generation seeks after a sign. The man nevertheless insisted, whereupon Alma caused him to be struck dumb through the power of God (30:50). Korihor then wrote, saying that he had been mistaken and that he had lied because he knew there was a God. He made it
known that the devil had deceived him because he had appeared unto him in the form of an angel and had called upon him to go and reclaim the people. Korihor's request that Nephi take away the curse was denied. Alma told him that if the curse were taken off he would go again among the people teaching false doctrines. Korihor was led to such straits that he had to go from house to house begging food for his support. When he came among an apostate group of Nephites known as Zoramites, he was run down and injured to such an extent that he died. The lesson that the Nephite record draws out of the Korihor incident is significant. It states:

“And thus we see the end of him who perverteth the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell.” (Alma 30:60.)

Even the present generation can take notice of this lesson. There is no honor in the devil or his followers. In dealing with the episode of Korihor, we have mentioned the Zoramites. In this connection, it should be pointed out that Alma took a mission among the Zoramites with the thought of reclaiming them. He took with him on this mission a strong group of men consisting of Ammon, Aaron, Omner, Amulek, Zezzrom, and two of his sons. The reasons for this ministry are rather significant. Since the Zoramites resided near the country of Jershon where the converted Lamanites lived, Alma thought that the Zoramites might get into contact with the disbeliefing Lamanites and bring about wars and bloodshed. A very significant verse relative to missionary labor is the following:

“And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yet, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened to them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.” (Alma 31:5.)

The spirit of this verse is of great value in our own times. How much more valuable to the world have been the efforts of humble missionaries than the efforts of men with swords!

When the missionaries had observed the customs of the Zoramites, Alma offered a prayer unto the Lord in which he asked for his success and that of his brethren in the ministry. He also uttered the following words which concerned the Zoramites:

“Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.” (Alma 31:35; cf. Moroni 9:6.)

These beautiful words bring home to us a great religious lesson: even apostates from the Church have souls that are precious to God. It is our responsibility, if possible, to reclaim our erring brethren.

After separating one from another the missionaries began to preach and labor among the Zoramites (31:37). While Alma was speaking on the hill Onidah, a great multitude came to him, many of whom were poor, both in heart and as to the things of the world. He taught that those who were compelled to be humble were blessed, particularly if they repented of their sins and endured to the end, but that those who were humble in spite of their poverty were even more blessed (32:13-15). Then he said:

“... blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe.” (Alma 32:16.)
Alma then spoke upon the principle of faith. He distinguished, first of all, between faith and knowledge. If a man knows a thing, the Prophet concluded, he has no cause to believe, for he knows. Then he gave the following great statement concerning faith:

“...And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true.” (Alma 32:21.)

This statement is basically sound. Unfortunately, many people make no distinction between faith and credulity. A person who is credulous may believe in something which has no rational basis, but one who has the power of faith has a hope for things unseen which are based on truth. Truth is the foundation stone of faith. Alma also said that if the people would awake and arouse their faculties, even to experiment upon his words and exercise a particle of faith—indeed, if they could only desire to believe, they should let this desire work in them until they could find a place for a portion of his words. A comparison which he made is significant and psychologically sound. He said:

“Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding. yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.” (Alma 32:28.)

It should be noticed that what he says in verse 27 respecting experimentation in the realm of spiritual matters is also a basically sound principle. We experiment very commonly in the realm of the physical world. Why shouldn’t we experiment with the promises of God and find out for ourselves whether or not they are true? In at least two places, Alma emphasizes the necessity of experimenting (see Alma 32:27, 36).

He continued to preach to the Zoramites by telling them that if they would nourish the tree of faith as it begins to grow, it would take root and be a tree springing up into everlasting life (32:41). Alma’s discourse on faith in this chapter is one of the most wonderful of its kind in all scripture. It should be read and re-read by all interested in the fundamental nature of faith.

Apparently some of the Zoramites complained to Alma that they could not worship God because they had been cast out of their synagogues (Alma 33:2). He pointed out that in this supposition they greatly erred, because the prophet Zenos taught that God had heard his prayers when he was in the wilderness, and that He had heard him when he was in his fields or when he was in his house (33:4-7). In fact, it makes no difference where a man is; no one can hold him from his God. If a man prays, whether in his field or in prison, God can hear him and worship may continue. Alma also quoted the prophet Zenock concerning matters of value to the people.

When Alma had finished, his friend Amulek stood up and taught the people. He advised them to try the experiment of which Alma had spoken. He also spoke about the coming of the Christ who should atone for the sins of the world. He spoke of Christ’s sacrifice as an “infinite and eternal sacrifice.” (34:10.)
He taught the people that anything short of an infinite atonement would not suffice for the sins of the world. Only Christ could be the great and last sacrifice, infinite and eternal (34:14). By reason of His sacrifice He would make it possible for all who believe in His name to receive salvation. Through His sacrifice He could set in operation the power of mercy which would moderate or overpower justice. Only mercy could satisfy the demands of justice and encircle men in the arms of safety. Alma emphasized the necessity of calling upon God's holy name in prayer. He advised his audience to cry unto God at all times wherever they were, whether in their fields with their flocks, in their homes, in the wilderness, or whatever the situation (33:18-26). He also advised them to remember to be charitable. If they were not charitable, they would be as dross which the refiners cast out as of no worth.

Another remarkable part of Amulek's sermon concerns what he said about the value of mortality in the plan of salvation. He taught that this life is the time when men should prepare to meet God. He exhorted his audience not to procrastinate the day of their repentance until the end. If they did so and did not improve their time while in this life, there would come a night of darkness wherein they could perform no labor. He said:

"Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world." (Alma 34:34.)

He added that those who procrastinated the day of their repentance until death would subject themselves to the spirit of the devil who would seal them his. For that reason the Spirit of the Lord would withdraw from them and have no place in them, and the devil would have all power over their souls. Amulek advised the Zoramites to contend no more against the Holy Ghost, but to receive it and take upon themselves the name of Christ and humble themselves even in the dust if it were necessary. They were also exhorted to be watchful and prayerful continually in order not to be led away by temptations of the devil.

When Amulek had finished preaching to the people, he and Alma withdrew and came over into the land of Jershon where the believing Lamanites were (Alma 35:1). The leaders of the Zoramites, on the other hand, took pains to inquire among the people as to who had believed in the words of Alma and Amulek. When they had determined who they were, they cast them out of the land. The believing Zoramites went over into the land of Jershon, where their Lamanite brethren received them kindly. There Alma and his brethren ministered among these people. The Zoramites threatened the Ammonites in the land of Jershon because they received their repentant fellows. They attempted to stir up the unbelieving Lamanites to make war with the Nephites. The Nephite armies, however, prepared themselves in the land for any eventuality that might take place. The result of the mission to the Zoramites was on the whole very satisfying. The missionaries had been instruments in the hands of God in bringing many of the Zoramites to repentance (35:14). Alma was grieved, however, because of the iniquity he found among his people in Zarahemla. He was much concerned about the wars and the bloodshed and contentions
among them. Perceiving that the hearts of his people had become hard, he caused that his sons should be gathered together, in order to give each one of them a father's charge concerning things pertaining to righteousness.

**ALMA’S COMMANDMENTS TO HIS SONS.** Chapters 36-42 of Alma form a literary unit because they contain the advice and commandments of Alma to his three sons, Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton. Chapters 36 and 37 deal with the Prophet’s words to his son Helaman. His remarks to Helaman consisted mainly of a recital of his own conversion to the Church, of how an angel appeared to him and made known that he would be destroyed if he continued to persecute the Church of God. He told Helaman about the great spiritual pains and torments suffered during the three days that he was unable to use his limbs (36:10-16). He had led many of the Nephites away into destruction, and the thought of coming back into the presence of God under such conditions racked his soul with inexpressible horror (36:14). After telling about his terrible experiences during the three days that he lay stricken, he explained to Helaman how he had labored without ceasing since that time to bring souls unto repentance. He bore testimony to his son that the Lord had given him great joy in the fruit of his labors. He also testified that he knew the Lord would raise him up at the last day to dwell with Him in glory because of the work which he had done (36:28). Alma exhorted Helaman to keep the commandments of God; if he did, the Lord would prosper him in the land; otherwise he would be cut off from His presence (36:30). After having given this advice, he gave Helaman a charge to keep a record of the Nephite people upon the plates of Nephi (37:1, 2). All of the sacred relics which had been retained by the prophets before them were also conveyed into his custody. Alma spent considerable time in telling Helaman about the Plates of Brass and the other records that had been handed down from past times in order that they might come unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. He told Helaman that except for the scriptures which were on these Nephite records, Ammon and his brethren could not have convinced so many thousands of the Lamanites of the unsound traditions of their fathers. Moreover, he pointed out that no one knew but what he would be the means of bringing many other thousands of people to a knowledge of their Redeemer (37:10). He spoke particularly of the twenty-four plates of Ether and of the mysteries, works of darkness, and the secret works of those people who had been destroyed. Helaman was advised to be careful and not let a knowledge of these ancient, sinister works of darkness and abomination come to the people of his own time (37:21-32). The young Prophet was commanded to teach his people an everlasting hatred against sin and iniquity. His mission was to preach repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to command all people to be humble, meek, and lowly in heart in order that they might withstand every temptation of the devil. Under such conditions they should find rest for their souls. Alma told his son to learn in his youth to keep the commandments of God (37:35). He also advised him to cry unto the Lord for his support at all times in order that his affections might be placed upon the Lord forever. The following statement of Alma indicates the wise nature of the counsel he gave his son Helaman:
"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (Alma 37:37.)

Alma then called Helaman's attention to the Liahona or sacred director which had led their fathers in the wilderness. He told him that no man could do work in the manner of so curious a workmanship, and that it functioned for their fathers according to their faith in God (37:39). Therefore if they had faith to believe that God could cause those spindles to point the way they should go, it was done. He then made a comparison: it was as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which would point him to the straight course of eternal bliss, as it was for their fathers to give heed to this sacred instrument, which pointed them a straight course unto the promised land (37:44).

Alma's commandments to his son Shiblon were not as lengthy as those to Helaman. Perhaps this was because of the fact that Alma had to give special instructions to his eldest son concerning the sacred relics and records which had been handed down from their forefathers. Shiblon was commended by his father because of his steadiness and his faithfulness to God (38:2). Alma advised him to continue keeping God's commandments even as he had commenced in his youth. The Prophet also bore his testimony to Shiblon concerning the pain and anguish of soul which he suffered when the angel of God stood before him and commanded him to cease his persecution of the Church. He then advised his son that no man could be saved except through Jesus the Christ. The youth was admonished not to have his heart lifted up in pride; he was to use boldness but not become overbearing toward others. He was given a commandment to bridle his passions so that his heart might be filled with love. It is significant that he was also advised to refrain from idleness (38:12). The Nephite prophets knew what a danger idleness could be to men. One piece of advice that he gave his son should be quoted verbatim. It reads:

"Do not pray as the Zoramites do, for ye have seen that they pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom. Do not say: Oh God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say: Oh Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy — yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times." (Alma 38:13, 14.)

All of us must admit that this advice of Alma's shows his loving nature and the regard that he had for the souls of all men. It is to be reckoned as part of the great teachings of the Book of Mormon.

The commandments of Alma to his son Corianton are far more extensive than those to the other brothers. Perhaps Alma spent more time with Corianton than with his other sons, because the youngest was inclined to serious sins. In our day we would say that he was wont to follow the primrose path. Alma reminded his son of his waywardness during their mission to the Zoramites. While others were preaching to these people he stole away to the borders of the Lamanites after a harlot by the name of Isabel. Alma upbraided him severely for his wickedness and pointed out that unchastity was abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost (39:5). Corianton was told that he could not hide
his crimes from God, and unless he repented they would stand as a testimony against him at the last day. His scandalous conduct had had a great effect upon the Zoramites, for when they had seen it they would not believe the words of his father. In fact, Alma said:

"... Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words." (39:11.)

These words of Alma should be a great lesson to all of us. Our conduct does indeed speak louder than our words. Alma informed his son that the Spirit of the Lord had said unto him:

"Command thy children to do good, lest they lead away the hearts of many people to destruction; ..." (Alma 39:12.)

Here we have the advice of the Lord concerning the necessity of teaching children to do right. Our own children may, under certain conditions, lead away many people to spiritual destruction, unless properly taught.

Alma instructed his son concerning the resurrection of the dead, because Corianton seems to have been worried about it. He said that there would be no resurrection of the body until after the coming of Christ; moreover, there was need of a space of time between death and the resurrection (40:1-6). He explained that an angel had made known to him the fact that when the spirits of men are departed from their mortal bodies, they are taken home to their God who gave them life. The spirits of the righteous are received into a state of happiness called paradise, which is a place of peace and rest where they rest from all troubles, cares, and sorrow. But the spirits of the wicked, that is to say those who have no part or portion of the Spirit of the Lord, who have given themselves completely to the work of the evil one, shall find themselves in a terrible state. They shall be cast out into outer darkness where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth because of their own iniquities, they being led captive by the will of the devil. This state between death and the resurrection is for the wicked a kind of hell, an "awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them." (40:14; see also vss. 11-13.) They remain in this condition, as the righteous remain in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.

In the resurrection, Alma pointed out that the soul shall be restored to the body, that every limb and joint shall be restored to its proper place, that even a hair of the head shall not be lost, but that all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame. He spoke of the resurrection as bringing about a restoration such as had been spoken of by the mouths of the prophets (40:22).

Alma perceived that his son had also been worried concerning the doctrine of the restoration of which he had spoken. He explained that it was requisite with the justice of God to see that all things should be eventually restored to their proper order. Therefore, in the resurrection the soul of man should be restored to its body, and every part of the body should be restored to itself (41:2). He also explained to Corianton that just as men's bodies should be restored, so also should they have a spiritual restoration according to their works. If men's works were good in this life and the desires of their hearts were good, they should be restored to that which is good. On the other hand, if their works were evil, they should have restored
unto them that which is evil. It was explained that all men who are in a state of nature, that is to say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, and without God in the world (41:11). Consequently, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness. It would therefore be impossible for a man who was evil to be restored to that which is good, since this would be an unnatural state. He said:

"O, my son, this is not the case; but the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish—good for that which is good; righteous for that which is righteous; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful." (41:18)

Corianton was therefore counseled that he should be merciful in dealing with his brethren. Observe the following:

"... deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again." (41:14)

All must agree that this counsel of Alma is righteous and just. It is a credit to the Book of Mormon.

In Chapter 42 Alma expounded to his son the principles relating to justice and mercy. He explained the situation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the meaning of the events that took place there. After man had fallen he became carnal and sensual in nature. Therefore this life became a probationary state for him to prepare to meet God (42:10). Except for the fact that God had prepared means for men to repent and to have their sins atoned for, they must have inevitably been cut off from the presence of God forever. This is what is meant by the second death. Alma explained carefully to Corianton that the Lord had prepared a way whereby men's sins could be atoned for on condition that they repented. When men break the law there is a punishment affixed, and a just law is given which brings remorse of conscience unto men (42:18). When men repent of their sins, then mercy may extend her claims. Otherwise justice claims "the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God." (42:22)

Corianton was taught that God is just, merciful, and kind, and through the atonement makes it possible for all men to be restored to His presence and judged according to their works, according to the demands of law and justice. Alma's advice on mercy, justice, and the atonement, should be read carefully by all students of the Book of Mormon. (See especially 42:12-26.) When he had finished giving instruction to his son, he advised him to go on his way and preach to the people. He said these words:

"And now, O my son, ye are called of God to preach the word unto this people. And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness, that thou mayest bring souls unto repentance, that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them. And may God grant unto you even according to my words. Amen." (42:31)

It would appear from what Alma said to his son that there was hope for him if only he would repent and carry the plan of salvation unto others.

The remainder of Alma's record is contained in Chapters 43 and 44. In these chapters we have an account
of a severe war between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Lamanites were led by Amalekites who were more wicked and murderous than the Lamanites themselves. Through the inspiration and prophetic nature of Alma, the great Nephite generals, Moroni and Lehi, were able to surround and cause the surrender of the Lamanite armies. This was done only after there had been severe losses on both sides, but more especially among the Lamanites. These two chapters, which are abridged from Alma's record, are important if only because of the lessons they give us concerning the power of the spirit of prophecy. Through Alma's inspiration and the revelations of God which were given to him, the Nephites were saved from great losses, which undoubtedly would otherwise have occurred among them. Thus we see that God takes care of his own, when they are ready to follow Him and keep His commandments.

II. THE RECORD OF HELEMAN, SON OF ALMA THE YOUNGER (CHAPTERS 45 TO 62)—THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF ALMA. With Chapter 45 of the Book of Alma we begin the study of a record the original of which was written by Alma's son Helaman. It tells about the last days of the younger Alma. It would appear from the sacred record that he was cognizant of his imminent disappearance from the midst of his people. Therefore, he came to his son Helaman and questioned him concerning his belief in Christ. Having received a satisfactory answer from his son, he blessed him and told him that the Lord would prosper him in the land (45:2-8). He told how the spirit of revelation had revealed to him that within 400 years from the time that Jesus Christ should mani-

fest himself unto the Nephite nations, the people should dwindle in unbelief. As a result, the final wars, famine, bloodshed, and pestilences should cause the people of Nephi to become extinct. All of the disciples of the Lord, he said, should be pursued by the Lamanites until they became extinct (45:14). Having said these things to Helaman, Alma blessed his other sons, and also the Church. When he had done this, he departed out of the land of Zarahemla and was never heard of more. The sacred record states that as to his death or burial "we know not of." (Alma 45:18.) The sacred historian makes this significant comment:

"Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man; and the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken up by the Spirit, or buried by the hand of the Lord, even as Moses. But behold, the scriptures saith the Lord took Moses unto himself; and we suppose that he has also received Alma in the spirit, unto himself; therefore, for this cause we know nothing concerning his death and burial." (45:19.)

This quotation is an exceedingly interesting one. It is possible that the writer was attempting to imply that Alma had been translated, as it is probable that Moses was translated by the Lord. It will be remembered that on the Mount of Transfiguration Moses appeared with Elias (Elijah); according to the prophet Joseph Smith they conferred keys that were necessary for Peter, James, and John to have in their future work (Matthew 17; see Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 158). It may be reasonably inferred, therefore, that Moses appeared as a translated being, not as a spirit.

Following the disappearance of Alma, his son Helaman and associates tried to establish the Church throughout the land and attempted
to put down many little dissensions and disturbances which had come among the people (45:20-22). Notwithstanding the work of Helaman and his brethren, there arose considerable dissension among the various branches of the Church, and many people refused to give heed to these men. As a matter of fact this dissension led to an even greater rebellion among the Nephite people.

**DISSENSIONS AMONG THE NEPHITES LED BY AMALICKIAH AND MORIANTON.** It is significant that practically all of Chapters 46-62 of the Book of Alma deal with wars and contentions among the Nephites. Those who like war narratives should read these chapters, because they contain the best of the kind in the Book of Mormon. We shall not spend much time in dealing with the details of these wars of the Nephites among themselves and with the Lamanites. Chapters 46-50 deal mainly with the dissensions and rebellions led by two men, Amalickiah and Morianton. The rebellion of Amalickiah is of more importance than that of Morianton. It seems that Amalickiah was an imperious and ambitious man who wanted very much to be king. He led away many people by his flattery, and his dissension created a great deal of difficulty for the Church. When Moroni, the chief general of the Nephites, heard of these dissensions he became extremely angry with Amalickiah. He rent his coat in pieces and wrote upon it the following words:

"... In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children..." (46:12.)

This piece of coat he fastened upon the end of a pole; he then bowed himself to the earth and prayed mightily unto God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren so long as a band of Christians should remain to possess the land. Having prayed for his people, Moroni went forth among them, waving the rent part of his garment in the air that all might see the writing which he had placed upon it. He cried unto the people:

"Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them." (46:20.)

Many of the people gathered around Moroni and upheld him in his desire. When Amalickiah saw that there were more people on the side of Moroni than on his own, he took his forces and departed into the land of Nephi. There by treachery and deceit he eventually made himself king over all of the Lamanite forces. In so doing, he brought about the death of the king of the Lamanites and married the queen. It was his desire to put the Nephites in bondage by controlling their enemies. However, he did not reckon with the great Nephite general Moroni. Chapter 48 of Alma gives a marvelous tribute to this man. While Amalickiah was preparing the Lamanites to attack the Nephite people, Moroni prepared his people to resist them by strengthening Nephite fortifications and the places in the land that were weakest. Here is the tribute to him:

"And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery; yea, a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God, for the many privileges and blessings which
he bestowed upon his people; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people. Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood.” (48:11-13.)

After such a tribute it is not necessary for us to say more about the great character of this man. Moroni was assisted by other able Nephite generals such as Lehi and Teancum. Nor should we forget Helaman, who was also an able general and assisted the Nephites in the war by leading, as we shall find later, a band of two thousand converted Lamanites.

The preparations of Moroni baffled the invading Lamanites under Amalickiah. In fact, the Nephites did so well that in Chapter 50 we are informed that:

“...there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi, since the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni, yea, even at this time, in the twenty and first year of the reign of the judges.” (50:23.)

The success of the Nephites in battle is attributed by the sacred writer to the fact that the Nephites were close to God during all of their difficult experiences. They had faith in their leaders and kept the commandments of God. The record testifies thus:

“And thus we see how merciful and just are all the dealings of the Lord, to the fulfilling of all his words unto the children of men; yea, we can behold that his words are verified, even at this time, which he spake unto Lehi, saying: Blessed art thou and thy children; and they shall be blessed, inasmuch as they shall keep my commandments they shall prosper in the land. But remember, inasmuch as they will not keep my commandments they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.” (50:19, 20.)

We notice in this quotation that the usual Nephite philosophy of history is cited: if the people keep God’s commandments they shall not be cut off from the presence of the Lord. These accounts of the wars and contentions of the Lamanites and Nephi tives are therefore intended by the writers to be faith-promoting.

The second rebellion among the Nephites took place under the leadership of a man by the name of Morianton. The people of the land of Morianton claimed a part of the land of Lehi. Consequently a warm contention took place between the two people, who were determined to battle out their rival claims. The people of the land of Lehi, who were in the right, came over to the place where Moroni’s army was encamped. The people of Morianton were fearful that Moroni would come back and destroy them. Therefore they determined to flee to the north, away from the main body of the Nephites. Hearing of this fact, Moroni headed off the recalcitrants. Morianton was slain in battle, and his people were returned to Moroni’s camp. (See Alma 50:25-36.)

CONTINUED BATTLES BETWEEN THE NEPHITES AND LAMANITES. Chapters 51-62 of Alma deal with the continued wars and contentions of the two peoples. We find that a new chief judge was governor over the people. His name was Pahoran, the son of Nephihah, the second chief judge. Pahoran, a righteous man, cooperated with the Nephite generals in prosecuting the wars against the Lamanites. It should be pointed out that through the able strategy of Moroni and his generals the Lamanites were defeated or held in abeyance. The Nephite general Teancum was so angered by Amalickiah that he went over into the Lamanite camp by night and slew the king. The brother
of Amalickiah was appointed the king of the Lamanites in Amalickiah’s stead. This man, who was named Ammoron, continued the battles against the Nephites. The greatest war story and the most faith-promoting one in all of Nephite history is that found in Chapters 56-58 of Alma. This war story is contained in a letter written by Helaman to Moroni. It will be remembered that Helaman took the command of over two thousand young Lamanites whose parents had sworn never to take up arms against their enemies (53:14-22). But their sons, who had not taken the oath, placed themselves under Helaman’s command and helped the Nephites in their severe battles against the Lamanites. So great was the faith and the ability of these young men that they played an important part in defending the rights of the Nephite people. Moreover, God protected them so marvelously that although many were wounded, some severely, not one was killed. Let us cite Helaman’s own testimony:

“And it came to pass that there were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the foes of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds.” (57:25; see also 56:55, 56.)

This is a great tribute to the faith of the young Lamanite soldiers. Doubtless Helaman’s epistle was used by many Nephites in days to come as one source of faith-promoting stories.

There are others of these war narratives that are worth our notice. The reader’s attention is called to Chapters 60 and 61 of Alma; here we have an account of an epistle by Moroni to Pahoran in which he complains of the latter’s neglect of the armies in the field. In Chapter 61 we have Pahoran’s beautiful reply, in which he points out that he had difficulties against internal enemies and was unable to help the armies in the field as he had desired. Moroni thereupon marched to the relief of Pahoran, and the city of Zarahemla was recaptured from the rebels who had given Pahoran difficulty. Chapter 62 tells how the Nephites finally succeeded in bringing the wars with the Lamanites to a relatively successful conclusion.

III. THE ABRIDGMENT OF THE RECORD OF SHIBLON, THE BROTHER OF HELAMAN (CHAPTER 63). After the death of Helaman (Alma 62:52), his brother Shiblon took possession of the sacred things which had been delivered unto Helaman by their father Alma. Shiblon, a just man, was as careful to keep the commandments of God as his brother had been. Chapter 63 is simply a brief abridgment of some of his writings. In this chapter, we are told that Shiblon died, but not before he had conferred the sacred relics and records upon the son of Helaman, who was called by the same name as his father (63:13). A brief account of Nephite migrations is also given. Thus ends the Book of Alma with an account of the Nephites which takes us down to about the year 53 B.C.