

Zion's Advocate

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost."—1 Nephi 3:187.

Volume 22

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Number 5

Pray On

Pray on! though clouds obscure the sun,
And waves dash high against thy bark,
Our God some day, some unseen way,
Will answer, and make glad thine heart.
Pray on! Pray on!

Pray on! though friends do thee forsake,
And loved ones turn away and frown;
Each test will bring thee nearer God,
And thou wilt wear a brighter crown.
Pray on! Pray on!

Pray on! though sorrows cross thy path,
And thou must drink the bitter cup,
In sad Gethsemane One prayed and wept alone.
He died, arose, and lives for thee—look up:
Pray on! Pray on!

Pray on and on! the fight will not be long,
The mists and clouds must clear away;
Thou shalt behold thy Saviour face to face
And be with Him through cloudless, endless day.
Pray on! Pray on!

Pray on! the race with patience run—
He'll give thee grace to face the bit'rest strife;
Time flies apace—soon it will be no more;
Cling thou to Him, thy light—eternal life.
Pray on! Pray on!

—L. B. Micah.

CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 66	The Standard Bearers	Page 70
Letters	Page 67	Is There a Contradiction	Page 72
A Dream	Page 68	A Few Comments	Page 77
Independence News	Page 69	A Tribute to Mother's Day	Page 79
Notice of Disorganization	Page 69	Obituary	Page 80

ZION'S ADVOCATE

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EDITOR IN CHIEF, B. C. Flint, 209 S. Crysler, Independence, Missouri.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS, Margaret Wheaton, 1101 W. Orchard, Independence, Mo.; Marion Denham Sprague, 424 E. Walnut, Independence, Mo.

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Editorial

"THE HOUR OF GOD'S JUDGMENT"

Under the above caption an article appeared some time ago in one of our sister Restoration periodicals, written by one of its leading officials, which contains such peculiar ideas, that I have been requested to review it.

We are willing to undertake such a review, but with the utmost respect for the author even if we may not be able to agree in the least with the position taken. The article starts out with this amazing statement:

"Popular conception in the church appears to be that this is the hour of God's judgment (Revelation 14: 6-8). For many years the elders have quoted a scripture yet UNFULFILLED to support the divine commission of Joseph Smith. 'I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.'

"The general line of reasoning followed was, John said the angel would fly. Joseph saw the angel—and was visited by him. Hence, Joseph's commission was in line with this scriptural prediction. But this citation of scripture, used thus, is misplaced. John saw this heavenly messenger proclaiming an hour of judgment. That hour has NOT YET COME, and will not do so, until we comply with certain necessary dispensations and conditions." (Emphasis mine to call particular attention.—B. C. F.)

This is the first time we ever heard of a Latter Day Saint preacher taking such a position, because he goes on to say in his article that the "necessary dispensations and conditions," is for the church to establish what he calls Zion, and thus be qualified to be the judge of the earth, because he quotes this from latter-day revelation, "Behold, I the Lord have made my church in these last days, like unto a judge sitting on a hill, or in a high place, to judge the nations."

From our point of view, it would seem that our brother first got out on a limb and then sawed the limb off behind him, because this angel was not only to proclaim the "hour of God's judgment," but previous to that he was to bring back the "Everlasting gospel," to be preached on the earth. So the necessity of bringing it here was because it was NOT here, and needed to be restored back to the earth, in order that it might be preached to all nations, kindreds and people. So if it was not here it was because it had been taken from the earth, and there had been a great apostasy as predicted both by the old prophets and later by the apostles of Christ, particularly the Apostle Paul. This apostasy is conceded by most all religious teachers, and is actually proven by the Bible itself in its present form. No one will deny that the New Testament came into existence because the gospel was being preached during the period covered by New Testament history, or in other words, IT WAS THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, and the functioning of the Church of Christ in Christ's time that produced the New Testament. If there had been no New Testament church there would have been no New Testament which covered only about 100 years. That should be very obvious. Yet we find the Savior saying in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come." So here we have it. The gospel was here: It was to go away into apostasy: It was to be preached just before the end, as a witness to all nations. How was it to get here or be returned? The only statement in the whole Bible that tells us how the night of the dark ages was to be broken and the gospel returned to the earth is this text in question, found in the 14th chapter of Revelation in the sixth and seventh verses. The only conclusion therefore that could be reached would be that unless this angel has flown with the everlasting gospel, that everlasting gospel is not here, and will not be until that angel **does** fly to earth with it. Yet this article tells us that the church is to be a judge.

Let us see where this reasoning will lead us. In the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 12:20, "but if it be called in my name, then is it my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel." So we see that the gospel MUST come first, in order for the church to be built upon it. But our brother tells us that this scripture is yet unfulfilled; so, that being the case the gospel has not got back yet, so how can the church be condemned for failing to do something when its foundation is yet to come?

But we will go a little farther. In the 22nd verse of this same 12th chapter of 3 Nephi we read, "And if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel, then will the Father shew forth his own works in it." So now our brother, out on the limb, has the whole limb lopped off behind him, because he makes no note of the first part of what this angel was to do, but merely addresses himself to the part concerning the "hour of God's judgment," and in that he is merely surmising that the "hour" of judgment is not here, and by a line of reasoning that will not bear the light of investigation. Now what is indicated by the "hour" of time? We learn from Matthew 20:1-12 that the various "hours" there,

are dispensations of time in which the gospel was to be preached among men and that it would be in the "eleventh hour" of the world's history that the last set of laborers were to be sent into the vineyard, and they are announced as working BUT one hour, (12th verse), and the others complained about it. Then what was this eleventh hour, and when did it begin, and what was its purpose? Our brother has already told us that it was that the church might judge the earth or nations. Very well then, the moment that "hour" was ushered in it was the "hour" of judgment, which it would have to be if it was the hour of establishment of the church. So that angel DID fly, and bring the gospel, and because he brought the gospel the church could be built upon it, and the Lord could show forth his own works in it, which would include final judgment.

Here is a simple illustration: The term of Circuit Court is called and is in session; the judge is on the bench; the jury is empanelled, and the cases are to be heard. Everyone knows that the hour of judgment has been reached for all who are to be called before that tribunal. But the cases must be tried, testimony must be heard, the counsel on both sides of the cases must make their pleas, and there IS NO judgment rendered until all of these preliminaries have been attended to, yet that fact makes no change in the idea that it is the "hour of judgment" for all who may have a case before that court. Otherwise, what would be the purpose of the court at all?

The strange feature of this brother's whole argument is that it leaves us completely in the dark as to when and how the gospel and the church were to be restored upon the earth. He simply refutes the position that has been taken by the elders through the years, but gives us nothing in lieu thereof. Where is the consistency in claiming anything for the church and its prerogatives, until we are first informed as to the process by which the church and the gospel was to be returned to the earth after the apostasy of the dark ages? We have always alluded to this church of the restoration as being the result of an angel's message. Doesn't our brother believe this to be the case? If not, what has he to offer that will convince us that he has authority to preach the gospel, and if he has, what gospel is it that he is preaching? There is only one gospel known to scripture, and that is the gospel that our Master referred to when he said THIS GOSPEL of the kingdom, should be preached among all nations for a witness, before the end was to be ushered in. It is the only gospel known to God or his Son, and it was to be an exact duplicate of the gospel as preached by the Master and his disciples. It was to be a complete restoration of that gospel, and an angel was to be the means of its restoration. Where else can we look for it, if not in the latter day restoration? Does our brother wish us to accept the position of the mother of harlots, that the church has come down intact from the days of Christ and his apostles? If so, where is the scriptural backing for such a position?

It would seem that before we struck such a fatal blow at the very foundation of the restoration, we should have some logical explanation as to how the church would have any logical claims for its existence

now. In short, if that angel of Revelation 14:6, 8 has not flown then anyone claiming to preach the gospel NOW is an imposter according to the Bible, and must be so regarded unless some other scripture can be advanced that will show us that the coming of the restoration was not dependent upon THAT angel's flight; because, we know of no other angel with such a message for humanity, mentioned in scripture, anywhere.

Therefore, in view of all that has been said above, we feel very content to continue to preach the restored angel's message, wherein it is taught that the angel of Revelation 14:6-8, visited Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the priesthood, which authorized them to preach the everlasting gospel, or "this gospel of the kingdom," and upon which gospel the Church of Christ was again built, and which in turn has brought the whole world under God's judgment for their rejection of that gospel, and as indicated by the present world chaotic condition, or as further indicated that it was that "little stone cut out of the mountain without hands," that has been crumbling the kingdoms of the world, as a result of it being the "HOUR OF GOD'S JUDGMENT."

Proof texts: Isaiah 24:1-6; Zephaniah 3:1-8.

B. C. FLINT.

Letters

England, February 2, 1945.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am very sorry that I have taken so long to answer your letters and Christmas cards. I was very happy and grateful for your thoughtfulness and interest in my welfare, and for the prayers expressed in them.

I am, and shall always be in need of your prayers as many others like myself are, and also those in far more desolate places and conditions than many of us realize. We are not only grateful for the prayers you have already offered in our behalf, but also the ones we are certain you will continue to offer for us.

The picture of the "little white church on the Temple Lot" brings to mind some of the most beautiful memories and experiences of my life. Not only my own personal ones but those we have shared with others as well. Experiences that only those who believe in and love God and His word, and heed his commandments, can understand and fully appreciate. And not one of us would exchange them for the world's wealth and riches.

To be back with you and a normal life, both spiritually and physically, is my constant prayer for myself and every other man or woman involved in this unpleasant business of war, whether they are in the armed forces or in civilian life.

What a glorious day it will be when we each and every one can be "about our Father's business." If only the world could realize the pleasure and wealth of "His business" what a peaceful and wholesome place this world would be to live in.

We also think and pray for each and every one

of you at home. We pray that God will put your minds at rest concerning the welfare of those you love and who are separated from you, and that He might shorten your grief and anxiety if it be His will.

I was very happy to hear of the increased attendance lately and I for one wish I could add my name and presence to the congregation each week too. I AM there in thought and desire, but still I can feel the lack of spiritual food I depended on for so long. I try to attend our chapel services here as often as I can, but it is not nearly enough. They do me a lot of good, but they lack a great deal that I was brought up to expect and depend upon at home.

I feel greatly the need of your prayers to help me over the pitfalls that seem more plentiful than the solid stepping stones are. I fear I have not always found those solid stones though I constantly try to maintain my vigil.

I also want to thank you folks for the book of poems. I have read them over several times already, and I like them a great deal. I suppose you remembered me quoting so many poems in the few sermons I have been privileged to deliver. You couldn't have chosen anything I'd have liked better.

Well I am afraid I must close now. I hope to hear from all of you again soon. I cannot promise to answer you each one individually, though I would like to, but I will write you again as the group of my dearest friends and brothers in Christ.

May God bless you in your efforts to further his work.

Your brother in Christ,
"DICK" WHEATON.

Capt. R. A. Wheaton
548th Sq. 385th Gp.
A. P. O. 559, New York, N. Y.

Note:—The above beautiful letter is from one of our fine upstanding young ministers here in Independence, and the son of Brother and Sister C. L. Wheaton. We are anxious to get as many of the above type of letters from our boys and girls in service to give to our readers as we can. We have missed some and we regret it.

We do not need to say much about Dick. His letter speaks for him. What an outstanding thing it is, and how refreshing to see that the rigors of this terrible war are not spoiling the sweetness and spiritual outlook of our Church of Christ boys. Dick is a bombardier and has seen the most terrific kind of service, yet he is coming through it like a true man of God. When he was home a few months ago on leave, he attended service and also visited in our home, and we failed to see wherein he was allowing the experiences through which he was passing to spoil him in the least. From his letter it is easy to understand why, and it is that he is making the gospel the supreme guiding force in his life. May God richly bless and protect him and all of the rest of our boys, is our prayer.—B. C. Flint.

Forest Grove, Ore., March 23, 1945.

Dear Advocate:

Just received my March issue of the Advocate to-

day and as usual turned first to the letters. I too enjoy them very much. To me they seem to stand out as the testimony section of our paper. Perhaps it is when we are alone we feel this and need it the most.

There is no other Church of Christ member here in Forest Grove, so I attend the Reorganized Church. They are just a small group, and although most of them are relatives and dear to me, the feeling is not the same. There is not the warmth and common interests as with our own people. How I yearn to meet with them again.

Sister Marion Sprague leaves with us some beautiful thoughts in her article on prayer. Prayer truly is wonderful; a great source of comfort and strength. I am so thankful I was taught as a child to look to our heavenly Father not only in times of sorrow and need, but also joy and thanksgiving. Often these days I wonder what we would do without this great privilege.

I would like to pass on a little thought I found the other day: "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."

Your sister in Christ,

HELEN GOULD.

A DREAM

Editor's Note: The following dream was related by our brother at a recent sacrament service. The moral contained in the latter part of the dream should be significant to everyone. It demonstrates so clearly the folly of expecting to gain entrance into eternal life without work or effort expended. While the opportunity, or means of entrance, is free and available to everyone through Jesus Christ, yet for everyone there is some work to be done, some obstacles to overcome which, if not accomplished, will barricade the entranceway, and the means of transportation to the heavenly portals will have availed us nothing.

I dreamed that a number of our church people were living on farms adjoining one another and close to a small city similar to Independence. We had all raised good crops that year because the Lord had blessed us. But after the harvest a group of men or people, were going around raiding the farms of our people, and persecuting them. We were at a loss to know what to do, and the Lord spoke to us and told us to gather our crops, and our stock, etc., and gather ourselves together at one farm, and our enemies, seeing us united, would fear to molest us. It seems that my farm was the largest, and had several houses and large barns and buildings on it, and I suggested that they all gather at our place. Several families decided it was a good thing, and moved over, but some were reluctant to do so and held back and would not move.

Later the Lord told us to meet in a hall upstairs in a certain building at a specified time and Christ would come to us and be in our midst. However we were warned not to reveal this to anyone outside of our number, or He would not come. The day came, and we all gathered together in the hall as we were instructed, but there was also a large crowd of people other than our own number present, for someone had disobeyed and told outsiders about the promised visit. The outsiders began to ridicule us, asking when Christ

would appear, and of course, he never did come just as we were warned he would not if we told anyone else.

Then my dream changed. I was told that I would be taken up to heaven if I would go and sit down upon a plank or platform in the form of an elevator. I went over and sat upon the elevator as instructed and immediately it began to ascend up into heaven. But the door into heaven had boards or some sort of barricades across it, and I could not get in, so the elevator descended to earth. I felt terrible about it, but I stayed right on. Soon it began again to ascend to heaven, and again I could not get in, so the elevator descended again to earth. This time I felt so badly that I burst into tears of disappointment, and cried as though my heart would break, for I wanted so terribly to enter into heaven. Then a voice said to me, "Are you not going to do anything about it? Will you not make an effort to remove that which is preventing you from entering?" Once again the elevator ascended toward heaven, and when I came to the doorway this time I reached forth my hand and tore away the barricade, and opened the door and entered freely in.

CHARLES E. DERRY.

INDEPENDENCE NEWS

It has been a long, long time since the flowering shrubs, fruit trees and early spring flowers have been as beautiful as they are this spring. Those who know say that our fruit crop will be very bountiful if old man frost stays away. Today is cloudy and cold, after a lot of warm and beautiful days. Rain and snow are in the offing, but we are hoping they will pass us by.

After our election of officers last month, Brother W. F. Anderson was chosen again to act as our pastor for the next six months, with a group of helpers, who we hope will all work for the advancement of the work here in the center place.

During the past month Brn. C. L. Wheaton, B. C. Flint, K. J. Smith, LeRoy Wheaton, Maynard Case, Elmer Hunter and our pastor, Brother W. F. Anderson, have occupied the pulpit giving us some very fine sermons.

Brethren LeRoy and Edward Wheaton spent a week taking treatments at the hospital in Excelsior Springs during the past month.

Sister B. C. Flint was among the sick folks for several weeks this winter, but we are glad to see her back in our meetings again.

Lieut. Nicholas Denham and wife of Pensacola, Fla., spent his leave in Independence visiting relatives and friends. We are always glad to welcome them in our meetings.

Sister W. F. Anderson had the pleasure of visiting her daughter and family in Dallas, Texas, for a couple of weeks.

A new study class was organized last month with Brother C. L. Wheaton as teacher. We are studying "The Origin of the Church of Christ." So far it is a very interesting class and the attendance has more than doubled in the three sessions we have had. We meet every Friday night.

Quite a while before Christmas the group here each wrote a short letter to the different young men who had been active in church work before they were called into the service of their country. All the letters to each boy were pasted together, with a picture of the church at the head. The replies are coming back of the pleasure that it has brought to the hearts of the boys who are far from home and loved ones. Of the joy it gave them to see the picture of the church where, in happier times they had gone to worship God. Of the pleasant memories they could recall of meeting them and the hopes that it would not be long until they could meet with us again.

Captain Richard Wheaton, who is somewhere in England, wrote such a nice letter to the church, which Brother Anderson read telling how he felt about receiving the letter. Sergt. William Sheldon, who is in Italy, also wrote a fine letter to the church about his letter. It made me wonder why we could not take a few minutes more often, when it brings such joy to the hearts of our boys, who are so far away and in need of all the cheer and help we can give, to let them know that we are thinking and praying for them during the trying times they are passing through.

Word came to us on April 2, of the death, after a brief illness, of Chester L. Heaton. Mr. Heaton was the husband of Margaret Wheaton, daughter of Brother and Sister Alva S. Wheaton. They have two small children, a son, Dexter LeRoy and a daughter, Elizabeth May. Our heart goes out to Sister Margaret in her hour of sorrow and we pray God to give her the comfort and strength she needs to carry on the duties of life and raising of her children.

It is nearing the time, when in other years some of you would be coming to Conference. We miss seeing all the old friends who have been coming so many years and hope that before another year comes round all the wars with all the pain and suffering, bloodshed and death, sorrow and heartaches will have come to an end. That the people throughout all the world will begin to learn to love each other as our Maker taught us to, not only to learn to love each other but to learn to love God with all our hearts, for only when the world is full of love will we ever have that abiding peace. When men shall know war no more and we shall do unto others as we would wish to be done by. Then we can all meet in a very happy conference to give thanks and sing songs of praise to our loving heavenly Father.

ORA BUTTERWORTH DERRY.

NOTICE OF DISORGANIZATION

For reason of going contrary to the articles of faith and law of the church; by choosing a priest to preside over the branch, while elders in good standing were available, the local Church of Christ, Temple Lot, at Muskegon, Michigan, has been declared disorganized. Until such time as the membership of said local shall act again in harmony with the law of the Church by choosing an elder for pastor of the local.

Signed, WILLIAM POSTMA.

Asst. Missionary in charge of Mich.

The Standard Bearers

STORIES OF THE RESTORATION

We have already told our young people about the marvelous experience the young prophet Joseph Smith had, when he felt in doubt as to the proper course for him to take in the matter of religion, and he was impressed by the statement in James 1:5 that if any lacked wisdom, they might ask of God, "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," and that, in accordance with this assurance, he went to the woods near his father's home, and while pouring out his soul to God, the powers of darkness first undertook to destroy him. But upon his continuing to plead with God this power was banished, and in a great and brilliant light from heaven appeared two personages; one of whom addressed him and said, pointing to the other, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." At the time this occurred, Joseph Smith was only a lad of about fifteen years of age. This then should be an encouragement to the young people of the church, that this in reality began as a church as a young people's church. Today, our young people too often feel that the older folks are the ones God has designed to carry it on, when the very opposite is true. The wise man has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go when he is young and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It may also be of interest for us to know that such experiences as that had by the young boy, Joseph Smith has not been confined to him alone, but that others have had very similar experiences. The author of this department had an almost identical experience, when he was about the same age as was Joseph Smith, and the young folks may like to hear about it.

I was born February 16, 1880, in western Iowa, and when I was about four we moved to Wisconsin, and settled on a farm not far from Blanchardville. This was where the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, really had its beginning in a small branch of the old church that had been in existence there. This fact, however, was of no value to me in regard to what afterwards happened. In fact, it was intended to have the very opposite result, because my father had been born within five miles of Blanchardville, and was among those who were very, very bitterly opposed, and I was taught from childhood to look upon the so-called Latter Day Saints as a very wicked and deluded people. However, God has His own way in bringing about his righteous purposes, so when I was about fifteen years of age, I with practically all of the young people in the neighborhood, became converted at a revival meeting that was being held in the little country Methodist church in our community. Among these young people was a young Norwegian boy who had drifted into our neighborhood following the great depression following the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago. He with the rest became a convert to the Methodist Church.

About a year after this revival meeting an elder of the Restoration came into that country preaching the gospel. This young Norwegian friend of mine attended the meeting, which, to me, was the most terrible thing imaginable. I remonstrated with him for going to hear the "Mormons." He replied that he was willing to hear anything, and that his going to hear the latter day preacher would not deceive him, and I finally was prevailed upon to go to hear for myself. Of course, I went full of prejudice, and determined not to believe anything that was said. The result was that I continued to go, not with any intention of believing, but because I felt that the fact of his proving everything by the Bible made him even more dangerous than I had at first expected. My friend and I continued to discuss this matter daily in our home, he defending and I opposing until I came to the place where I realized that the Bible was on that side of the story, and so I reversed sides in our daily discussion, my idea being that if the Bible taught that it was true, it would be true even if so bad a people as the saints were teaching it. Truly they were "wolves in sheep's clothing."

Like Joseph Smith I Too Went to Pray for Light

One evening about the middle of February, when all were preparing to go to rest, and when our discussion had reached the point that my friend chided me about the matter of being baptized, seeing I had so strenuously defended it as a principle of the gospel, he said to me, "Well if I believed that baptism was so necessary, I'd be baptized, because if you died where would you go?" Remember, I was not yet sixteen years of age and this thought struck me with force, so having also become satisfied that James meant what he said when he invited any who lacked wisdom to "Ask of God," so without further ado, and notwithstanding it was night, and a very dark night too, I went out to the old barn on the farm and knelt down in the dark on the hay, and began to pour out my heart to God. I wanted to know if the sectarian ministry whom I knew, might not baptize me and it would be all right, because the idea of being a "Mormon" was just as repulsive to me at that moment as it had ever been. Immediately the same power of evil as mentioned by Joseph Smith sought to destroy me, and then I plead with God in earnest to save my life, and when I opened my eyes, I was in the same beautiful light as was seen by Joseph Smith. Even the hay seemed transparent in that marvelous light, and of course, outside it was pitch dark. I did not see any person, but a voice as audible as any that I have ever heard spoke to me and told me the gospel was true, and that if I obeyed it I would be blessed. I understood by "the gospel" was meant the thing that I had despised, this thing called Mormonism. Well, there was nothing for me to do but obey, so on the next Sunday, the elders having returned to that community, I was baptized on my sixteenth natural birthday, February 16th, 1896. It meant that I was now

a "Mormon" myself, and as such I soon began to pay the penalty. I was ostracized by all of my relatives and friends. I became an outcast from my father's home. I was the first one baptized in that locality at that time, all of the old time saints having moved away or died, but later my Norwegian friend was baptized, and was for years a missionary, a good part of the time in his native country. Still later others began to be baptized, but the solemnity of that wonderful experience has never left me, and it is now nearly fifty years since it happened. God does not change, nor does he depend solely on grown up people, but often DOES select the young folks to be his witnesses. I have never had to take back that testimony.

WHAT SHALL WE DO

Human nature delights to prescribe, and lay out a line of duty to be followed by others. It likes to set itself up as a standard of excellence, and judge the relative merits or demerits of all others as they may approximate to that standard.

With the majority of mankind, one of the hardest acknowledgements that can be made is, "I am wrong"; we like to think that our opinions, or faith, is so well grounded, that it is simply an impossibility that "I" can be mistaken or in error. Instead of making our faith according to the standards revealed in the word of God the effort is made and sometimes strenuously, to force the Bible to support certain theories, so as to prove the correctness of the standpoint or basis assumed, yet none are willing to acknowledge this to be the fact with regard to themselves, however much they may think it of other people; it is a folly nevertheless with which many are deceiving themselves, and which they will never discover until the judgment. Notwithstanding the positiveness of statements, the plain clear teachings of the scriptures, it is lamentable that such a division of opinion exists among the civilized world, believers in the inspiration of the holy record, as to make it an object of derision and comment, not to say contempt, of those whom we have denominated "heathen."

True, the claim is made, that there is really but little division after all, that the central doctrine among all classes who accept the inspiration of the scriptures, is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in the promises he has made concerning those who, by faith accept him as the Savior—their Savior; and some earnest men have even gone so far in the thought of the impossibility of error being found in the different beliefs presented for the consideration of humanity, as to teach that this state of things was designed to exist, and referred to 1 Corinthians 12th chapter in support of that argument:

"The body is not one member, but many, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee," etc. "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

And assert that this clearly indicates the fact, that various churches were intended to exist, for the combination of all shades of opinion and beliefs.

This is a very pretty picture on the face of it, to be sure, but unfortunately it lacks one essential element,

that of fact—truth. Even the "heathen" see a great inconsistency in this diversity of belief, and the Congress of World's Religion in Chicago in 1893 it is said, decided that unless the Christians had something better to offer than they had yet presented, they thought they should consider the advisability of sending some of their missionaries among the Christians. One thing was demonstrated quite prominently, that until a better understanding was had among these different societies accepting Jesus Christ as the Savior, and the Scriptures as his word it is both a useless and thankless task to send missionaries to them to convert them; their strong sense of consistency and their simple faith enabling them to see that something is wrong in the systems presented.

Jesus said: "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38.

He came to reveal to all men that which his Father desired them to do, that they might attain unto eternal life and glory; he did not give anything as his opinion, but all his teachings were inspiration—by precept and example he plainly laid down the rules by which man might come to his Father acceptably, and the Lord very early in the history of the race, demonstrated that man could not acceptably worship him in any other way than that which he prescribed.

Cain brought as an offering unto the Lord some of the fruits of the ground; Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, (Genesis 4th chapter). Now, it is evident that the Lord had before this given a commandment concerning the offerings to be made, and subsequent history shows that they were to typify the sacrifice of the "only begotten." As a "lamb slain," and as the fruits of the ground could not in any way point to that event Cain's offering was not accepted. Thus we are taught that there is but one way in which we can come to God acceptably, and that is, in and through the laws of the gospel as taught by Christ and his apostles. He did not have one way for the Jews and another way for the Gentiles. It was forcefully impressed upon Peter and afterwards upon all of the apostles in the case of Cornelius and his household, that God is no respecter of persons, the one thing needful being the working of righteousness, doing that which God commands; the same laws and rules apply to all, and every departure from that plan has been an innovation of man, unauthorized, and hence unacceptable to God.

Safety can only be assured by rejecting all opinions of men, and searching the scriptures to ascertain the plan that Jesus Christ established, and himself obeyed, find the church or organization which adheres in every particular to that plan and that show the fruit "the signs following." Mark 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 13th and 14th chapters; James 5:11-, unite with that church, and seek to bring forth the fruits of the spirit from which assuring evidence will be given you, that your offering is truly accepted. The promise is, "You shall know of the doctrine."—John 7:17.—From Zion's Ensign, August 22, 1896.

Original Articles

We solicit articles for this department written in an affirmative manner. An affirmative article is one in which a premise is established, and evidences presented to support that premise. In all controversial articles, contributors will be required to observe the rules of decorum established by parliamentary rules governing deliberative assemblies.

Editor's Note: The following article by Elder I. M. Smith was written quite a number of years ago, so the Book of Mormon quotations are not from the Authorized edition put out by the Reorganized Church in 1908, and which is in quite common use among our people, but from an earlier edition.—B. C. Flint.

IS THERE A CONTRADICTION?—NO. 1

By Isaac M. Smith

Since the publication of tract No. 17, "The Atonement of Christ and the Final Destiny of Man," some of my brethren have asked me to harmonize the position set forth in said tract with the teaching of the Book of Mormon. And, while I make no pretensions to being an adept at "splitting hard knots," I am always willing to give others the benefit of what little light I may have been able to gather from the study of God's word. And I do so the more readily because I feel myself indebted to others for nearly all of the little light I have. I am not an original thinker. But I promised those brethren to comply, if possible, with their request and, since then, have been giving the matter some little attention. And having examined the matter as critically as I was capable of doing, in the length of time devoted to the work, I have become more thoroughly convinced than ever before that there is no contradiction.

That there are "some things hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), I frankly concede; but as the same is true of Paul's writings, some of them at least, we should not hastily reject simply because we cannot understand. We know only "in part," brethren, and are still compelled to "see through a glass darkly"; but, if we continue in the faith, we may hope, "when that which is perfect is come," to "see face to face" and to "know even also as we are known."

In attempting to write on this subject, I assure you I have no pet theory to sustain; and feeling sure that nothing but the truth will stand the final test, I shall try to refrain from putting any "private interpretation" upon the word of God. When I shall stand before the Judge of all the earth, it would be humiliating, indeed, to learn that I had been in the dark myself but it would be far more humiliating to there learn that I had been the means of leading others into the dark, and that my life had been simply another example of the blind leading the blind. And believing that I fully realize this, I shall strive to write in the fear of the Lord, and shall hope for sufficient light to prevent my teaching anything that would cause my brethren to stumble, even though my effort may not be entirely free from error.

The Nephites Were Very Hard Hearted

Inasmuch as the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthian saints,—

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in

Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:1, 2),—

and inasmuch as the Savior said to his disciples,—

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12),—

it will be necessary for us to know what kind of people the Nephites were, in order to properly understand that which was spoken to them; and I shall therefore call your attention to the testimony of some of their prophets respecting their peculiar dispositions. (I quote altogether from the large print edition of the Book of Mormon.)

"And the people were a stiff-necked people, hard to understand. And there was nothing save it was **exceeding harshness**, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God; and all these things stirring them up continually, to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was **nothing short of these things**, and exceeding great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction."—Enos 1:27-29.

(All bold type in the above and subsequent quotations are mine; and are used simply for emphasis, with no intention of changing the sense.)

"Now this great evil, which came upon the people because of their iniquity **did stir them up again** in remembrance of the Lord their God. . . . And thus we see, that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death, **and with terror**, and with famine, and with all manner of pestilences, they will not remember him."—Helaman 4:39, 47.

And Nephi said of his brethren:—

"And there was nothing, save it were the power of God, which **threatened them with destruction**, could soften their hearts."—1 Nephi 5:123.

The foregoing statements, with others of a similar import, in different parts of the book, give us an idea of what kind of people the Lord had to deal with, and also of the kind of teaching best suited to their peculiar dispositions. Hence, if you have been inclined to think that the writers of the Book of Mormon used strong language, in portraying the punishment of the wicked, and in threatening the people with destruction, you will please bear in mind that "nothing short of these things" would "soften their hearts," and "keep them in the fear of the Lord"; that it was only by "continually reminding them" of "the judgments of God," and the "duration of eternity," that they were kept "from going down speedily to destruction." And, if our Savior and the Apostle Paul withheld many things from the peo-

ple, until they were sufficiently developed in the divine life to comprehend them, we should expect the Nephite prophets to use the same discretion in teaching the people on this continent; and I am sure they did so. They "kept back nothing that was profitable" unto the people, but at the same time they refrained from giving them that which they were "not able to bear."

With the foregoing description of the peculiar disposition of that people before us, let us now investigate the teaching of the Book of Mormon respecting the final destiny of man.

Those Who Have Sinned Through Ignorance

Of those who have never had the law of God, the Book of Mormon says:—

"And where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement: for they are delivered by the power of him: for the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not his law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel."—2 Nephi 6:24.

There is no misunderstanding this, surely, for it is clear, pointed, and full of mercy. The atonement of Christ satisfies the "demands of justice upon all those who have not his law given unto them," and for them there is "no condemnation" and "no punishment," but they are restored to that God who gave them breath."

Another writer says of this class:—

"And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord. And little children also have eternal life."—Mosiah 8:42-44.

"Not only is there 'no condemnation' and 'no punishment' for this class, but 'they have part in the first resurrection,' and 'have eternal life.'"

And Mormon testifies as follows:—

"For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing."—Moroni 8:25, 26.

All those who are without law are placed upon the same basis as little children; they are free from condemnation, cannot repent, are alive in Christ, and are to have "part in the first resurrection." So far, all is clear. But there is another class of people who have the law, and yet they are ignorant of God and his will as many of the heathens; and this, to my mind, is the class of people represented in this text:—

"For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam,

who have died **not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned.**"—Mosiah 1:66.

This class of people have "sinned," and hence they have "sins"; and sin is the "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). To assume that they did not have the law is to assume that they had not transgressed the law; and to assume that they had not transgressed the law is to assume that they had not "sinned"; and that would contradict the text quoted, for it says they had sinned. It is true they have ignorantly sinned, but they have sined; and the blood of Christ atones for their sins, too, even though they have died "not knowing the will of God concerning them." In fact, there are but few sinners who do know the will of God concerning them; there are but few, comparatively, and they are the ones who willfully rebel against God, after he has revealed his will to them. For proof of this I shall call your attention to some who have "ignorantly sinned." When our Savior was being crucified, he prayed for those who murdered him as follows:—

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—Luke 23:34.

And this does not apply alone to the Roman soldiers, for Peter said:—

"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."—Acts 3:17.

And Paul says of the same thing:—

"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."—Acts 13:27.

The Savior said "they know not what they do"; Peter said they did it "through ignorance"; and Paul says the reason they did it was "because they knew him not," and also because they did not know "the voices of the prophets, which are read every sabbath read in their synagogues every sabbath. And because of this ignorance Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them.' And Paul's testimony, as to their not knowing "the voices of the prophets, which are read every sabbath day," proves what I have written: that some who have the law are as ignorant of God's will as the heathen. You may think that this people were so wicked they would have crucified the Savior, even if they had known; but Paul says not. Hear him:—

"For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."—1 Cor. 2:8.

Had they known "the wisdom of God," that is, "the will of God concerning them," the Book of Mormon committed this horrible sin. Hence they "ignorantly sinned," and "his blood atoneth for the sins of those . . . who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them."

And the Savior tells his disciples that they shall be persecuted about as he was, and for the same reason:—

"But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."—John 15:21.

And again:—

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think

that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."—John 16:2, 3.

Now, if those who killed the followers of our Savior thought they were "doing God service," there can be no doubt that they "ignorantly sinned"; and, if they "ignorantly sinned" and then "died, not knowing the will of God concerning them," the Book of Mormon teaches that the blood of Christ atones for their sins.

I shall call your attention to one noted example of those who ignorantly persecuted the saints: the Apostle Paul. When Stephen was stoned to death, "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:58.)

"And Saul was consenting unto his death."—Acts 8:1.

"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison."—Acts 8:3. (See also Acts 9:1, 13, 14.)

And his own testimony of his persecuting the saints is as follows:—

"And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."—Acts 22:4.

"I verily thought within myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which things I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."—Acts 26:9-11.

That man had the law of God, and was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God" (Acts 22:3); he was doing what he says, "I verily thought I ought to do," and hence had "lived in all good conscience before God this day" (Acts 23:1). And in referring to his being put in the ministry, he says of himself:—

"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."—1 Tim. 1:13.

It is true that Paul repented while in this life, but many of his associates in persecuting the Saints did not repent in this life; and many of those who helped to murder the Savior continued to be as they were then, bitter enemies to the gospel; and yet the Savior said, "Father, forgive them." Will his prayer ever be answered?

I would not have you think that these sinners stand upon the same basis as those who have no law. Far from it. These sinners were "under condemnation," and they have to take their "punishment," too. The Savior said:—

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."—John 3:18, 19.

They were "condemned already," because they were walking in the dark when they might have been walking in the light. But they "would not," and hence they must suffer:—

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."—Luke 19:41, 42.

They did not **know** "the things which belong unto thy peace," for they were "hid from thine eyes"; and the Savior goes right on and tells them that the day shall come when their enemies shall come and destroy them and their city, laying them "level with the ground." And he says the cause of this would be, "because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (v. 44). (1 Cor. 5:1-5.)

No, I would not have you believe that people of this class were free from condemnation; neither would I have you believe that they will not be punished; the Book of Mormon does not teach that, neither does the Bible. But they "ignorantly sinned," and many of them "died, not knowing the will of God concerning them"; and the Book of Mormon does teach that the blood of Christ atones for the sins of that class of people; and the Savior's prayer, "Father, forgive them," is certainly in harmony with the teaching of the Book of Mormon. I do not ask you to believe that they shall "have part in the first resurrection," for the Book of Mormon does not so teach. I do not ask you to believe that they shall escape punishment in the world to come, for the Book of Mormon does not teach that. All I ask you to believe is that the blood of Christ atones for their sins, and that sometime, somewhere, and in some way, they will, through the power of that atonement, "be saved" and brought "unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4.)

Those Who Willfully Sin

Leaving, for the present, those "who have ignorantly sinned," I shall call your attention to a different class of sinners: those who willfully and knowingly sin against God. Of this class King Benjamin says:—

"But O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit, which was spoken of by my father Mosiah. For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that spirit: for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God, **contrary to his own knowledge.**"—Mosiah 1:45, 46.

The word **list** means to "desire; will; like." And, if a man desires to obey the evil one, and wills to do so, "contrary to his own knowledge," no power could prevent his doing so without taking from him his agency; and if he persists in that course, "remaineth and dieth in his sins," the blood of Christ does not and will not atone for his sins. When he dies, that is the end of his probation.

A little further on the same speaker says:—

"And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things,

if ye should transgress, and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths, that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved. I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God: therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and cometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples."—Mosiah 1:49, 50.

Those who "have known" the truth, and have then completely withdrawn themselves from the Spirit of God, so that it has no place whatever in them: they are the ones who list to obey the evil spirit; and, when they will to so do, they come out in rebellion against God. They become enemies to all righteousness. They know the will of God concerning themselves, and yet they desire and will to live in sin. And the speaker says of such:—

"Therefore, if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice doth awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flames ascended up forever and ever. And now I say unto you, that mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore, his final doom is to endure a never ending torment."—Mosiah 1:51, 52.

Verse 51, like verse 46, limits his probation to this earth life; for, after death, "mercy hath no claim on that man." And it is the same speaker who goes on to say:—

"For behold, and also his blood atoneth or the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned" (v. 66).

But he immediately adds:—

"But wo, wo unto him who **knoweth** that he rebelleth against God; for salvation cometh to none such, except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 67).

King Benjamin draws the line very clearly between those "who have ignorantly sinned" and those who have come out in "open rebellion against God"; the blood of Christ "atoneth for the sins" of the first, but "mercy hath no claim" on the latter. And his teaching and Paul's are the same. Paul says that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). And he also says that "if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26).

There is no disagreement here.

Turning again to the Book of Mormon, I shall call your attention to the testimony of Abinadi. After telling his hearers that little children and those who died before Christ came, "not having salvation declared unto them," are to "have part in the first resurrection," he says:—

"But behold, and fear, and tremble before God; for ye ought to tremble: for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him, and die in their sins; yea, even

all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have willfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection. Therefore had ye not ought to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath **redeemed none such**; yea, **neither can the Lord redeem such**: for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim."—Mosiah 8:45-47.

The prophet is here speaking of those who "rebel against him, and die in their sins"; of those who have "known the commandments of God" and "willfully rebelled"; these are to have "no part in the first resurrection"; "salvation cometh to none such"; "the Lord hath redeemed none such," and "neither can the Lord redeem such." He cannot "redeem such" because they have been redeemed once, and having forfeited all claim to the benefits of that redemption, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," and hence "mercy hath no claim on that man."

In verse 51 he speaks of the wicked being cast out at the final judgment, and says, "the Lord redeemeth them not"; that they are carnal, sensual, and devilish, "knowing good from evil, subjecting themselves to the devil." The same class of people of whom he is speaking in verses 45 and 47. In verses 53 and 54 he says that those who are in "rebellion against God" shall remain in their "fallen state" and be "as though there was no redemption made," and that the devil shall have all power over them. Read these two verses in connection with verses 45 and 47, and there will be no trouble in understanding them.

Verse 60, however, may require something more than a passing notice; and yet it is quite clear, if examined closely and in connection with what has already been quoted. Abinadi is speaking of the resurrection, and of people being brought to stand before the bar of God to be judged according to their works; and he says:—

"If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness, and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them which is damnation; having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities, and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent, and yet they would not repent."—Mosiah 8:60.

Please note that those who come forth "to the resurrection of endless damnation" have not been deceived nor blinded, so far as their knowledge of the truth is concerned, but have "gone according to their own carnal wills and desires." And you will remember that the word **list** means to "desire, will, like"; and that the man who "listeth to obey the evil spirit," the same "cometh out in open rebellion against God," and that his final doom is "to endure a never ending torment." And as those of whom the prophet is here speaking had desired and willed to go contrary to the

commandments of God, they must be of those who "rebel against him, and die in their sins." Yes, I know that Abinadi says of them, "having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them." But let us see to whom and of whom the prophet was speaking. The Lord said to him:—

"Go forth and say unto this people."—Mosiah 7:21.

"Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people."—Mosiah 7:31.

Please notice that the Lord here calls them "my people."

"Now Abinadi said unto him: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people."—Mosiah 9:11.

The Lord told him to go and prophesy "unto this my people"; and Abinadi, when he had delivered the message, said he would not recall the words which he had spoken "concerning this people." And "this people" had been humble and righteous at one time. (See Mosiah 6:17, 34, 43.) But they had been deceived by King Noah and his priests, and had become idolatrous. (See Mosiah 7:10.) Their eyes were blinded, (Mosiah 7:29,) and they hardened their hearts against the word of the Lord. But they were not deceived nor blinded, so far as their knowledge of the truth is concerned, for Abinadi said unto them:—

"Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know that I speak the truth; and ye ought to tremble before God."—Mosiah 7:62, 63.

They had been blinded and deceived, and led into abominations by their leaders, just as many of God's people were in the latter-day apostasy; but they still retained a knowledge of the truth sufficient to know it when it was spoken unto them. One of the accusations brought against them was that they had been guilty of "perverting the ways of the Lord" (v. 56); and, if they knew they were "perverting the ways of the Lord," and Abinadi said they did know it—then they were willfully rebelling against God. And Abinadi says to them, as already quoted: "But behold, and fear and tremble before God; for ye ought to tremble." But why had they ought to tremble? Listen to Abinadi's answer: "For the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins." (Mosiah 8:45.) You will notice that their probation is extended, even after they rebel against him, possibly to the end of their lives. And that agrees with King Benjamin, when he says of that man "remaineth and dieth in his sins," that "mercy hath no claim" on him. (See Mosiah 1:46, 51.)

Now those people, to whom Abinadi was speaking, had rebelled against God; and if they should "die in their sins" (v. 45), they must come forth "to the resurrection of endless damnation"; but at that time, the arms of mercy were being "extended toward them," and the Lord was calling on them, from time to time, to repent. But if they refuse to do so,—refuse to depart from their sins, and die in this condition, "having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them,"—then "mercy hath no claim" on them. And, as Abinadi said, he had spoken these words "concerning this people," we are not at liberty

to apply them to any other people, only those who are in the same condition.

Another very clear illustration of what willful rebellion is, we find in the Book of Nephi. He says:—

"Now they did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did willfully rebel against God."—Nephi, Son of Nephi, 3:14.

Please read Mosiah 1:66 again, and compare carefully with the above.

This people "did not sin ignorantly," and he explains why they did not: "for they knew the will of God concerning them." And they had been a righteous people, too, for he says "they did yield themselves unto the power of Satan" (v. 28), had "turned from their righteousness, like the dog to his vomit" (v. 30), and that he had been an "eye witness to their quick return from righteousness unto their wickedness and abominations" (v. 37).

And in the Book of Nephi, the son of Nephi, we have this:—

"And they did not dwindle in unbelief, but they did willfully rebel against the gospel of Christ."—Nephi, the Disciple, 1:31.

A clear distinction is made between those who "sin ignorantly" or "dwindle in unbelief" and those who "willfully rebel against God"; and that distinction is kept before the reader all through the book. Nephi said to the people:—

"But behold, ye have rejected the truth, and rebelled against your holy God."—Helaman 3:51.

But they knew the truth, when they rejected it; for he had just been telling them of the coming of Christ, that "he is God," and that he had manifested himself unto their fathers; and he said:—

"And now seeing ye know these things and cannot deny them, except ye shall lie."—Helaman 3:50.

He also tells them that the Lamanites "have not sinned against that great knowledge which ye have received" (v. 18). Not only this, but he says they have "forgotten your God in the very day that he has delivered you" (v. 14), and that they had "turned out of the way of righteousness" (2:135).

These texts give us a fairly good idea of what the writers of the Book of Mormon mean when they use such expressions as "perverting the ways of the Lord," "rejected the truth," "rejected the word of God," "rebelled against God," or "willfully rebelled against God." They do not refer to the man who has "ignorantly sinned," and then "died not knowing the will of God concerning" himself; but they refer to the man who has done these things knowingly and willfully, "contrary to his own knowledge." And if that man persists in his rebellion, "remaineth and dieth an enemy to God," he will be just "as though there was no redemption made," "for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such."

Probation, with those who rebel against God, ends with this life; and it may, through extreme wickedness, end before death. The Prophet Samuel after telling the people of the great calamities which would come upon them, and how they would weep and mourn, says:—

"But behold, your days of probation are past: ye

have procrastinated the day of your salvation, until it is everlastingly too late, and your destruction is made sure."—Helaman 5:29.

This was in the eighty-sixth year of the reign of the judges. Twenty years before this, the people were righteous; but in the sixty-sixth year of the reign of the judges, they began to turn away from the Lord, and it was only a short time till "the more part of them had turned out of the way of righteousness" (Helaman 2:135), and "the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites" (v. 139). And Nephi said to them, in the sixty-ninth year, that "ye have rejected the truth, and rebelled against your Holy God" (Helaman 3:51); and in the seventy-sixth year, the people repented, humbled themselves before the Lord, and were greatly blessed. (See Helaman 4:13-26.) But in the seventy-eighth year they began to indulge in contentions and strifes, and so continued until, in the eighty-first year, they were stirred up "again in remembrance of the Lord their God" (Helaman 4:39), by the afflictions which the Lord permitted to come upon them. The next year, however, "they began again to forget the Lord their God" (v. 41), and were soon very wicked again. And, four years later, the Lord said that "except they repent I will take away my word from them, and I will withdraw my Spirit from them, and will suffer them no longer" (Helaman 5:7); and then would be the time when Samuel says "your days of probation are past" (v.29).

(To be continued.)

A few comments on Editorial, "What we believe," and other matters.

Dear Brother Flint and Saints:

Today I received the Zion's Advocate of March, 1945, and among the different articles I enjoyed reading was the Editorial, "What we Believe." I certainly liked your interpretation and explanation on the articles of faith and practice of the Church and after reading this splendid Editorial, I asked myself this question, "Do we really believe those things?" For, when I compare the Church as we have it today, with the one pictured before us in the two standard books, I often ask myself again, "Do they really harmonize?" For, today I find so many things connected with the Church for which I have been unable to find any scriptural proof for their existence and I have searched the former and latter day revelations. So, again I ask, "from whence are they?" Thirty-three years ago, when I became a member of the Utah Mormon Church, I firmly believed I had found the pearl of great price—The Kingdom of God as it did exist on the earth in the long, long ago, and my joy seemed to be complete. But, how sad was my awakening when I soon discovered that so many things connected with that organization were only founded upon false revelations and silly notions of men and women. Again, my hopes were rekindled when the Elders of the Reorganization came into our locality and set forth their claim that their church was the only one harmonizing with the divine records.

So, for thirteen long years I enjoyed my association with them, and felt really at home and enjoyed many wonderful blessings from our Heavenly Father

during those happy years, for which I am truly grateful. But, how little did I think that I was due for another sad awakening—the time when this did happen is too well known by a good many of the Church of Christ, Temple Lot, members.

So, once more I went out to seek for light and truth, and He who said, "Seek and you shall find," led my steps to the little group on the Temple Lot, with whom I did cast my lot for which to this day I am not in the least sorry, for I feel that I have come more in accord and closer to the shepherd of my soul. How glad I felt and thankful that at last I had found the church that I sincerely believed would not tolerate anything to become part of them for which no "thus sayeth the Lord" could be found. But, now again the time has come that I am feeling concerned for the church, fearing that again we will be called upon to pass through much sorrow, because I am afraid we are mis-trusting the Lord, thinking that we puny creatures can and must improve upon His institution by adding our own borrowed ones from the world, to it. We think like the children of Israel of old that we must go into Egypt, the World, for help.

Now, Brother Flint, in your article printed in Zion's Advocate of December, 1944, Page 191, about the Seer stone and David Whitmer, you say, "And God does not change nor has a variety of schemes or Organizations as a means of Salvation, and again, how wonderful this unifies the scriptures and shows the plan of salvation and the form of Organization to be the same in all ages and among any righteous people who accept Christ." Those are your own words, Brother Flint. Do you believe them? And, if so, don't you think it would be a good idea to discard every organization found attached to the Church of Christ today, for which the Bible and Book of Mormon or Book of Commandments make no provision for? Please read 2nd Peter, 1:4. They have received ALL things pertaining unto life and godliness, and I don't think they believed it to be necessary for them to add a few more human schemes unto God's perfect set-up in order to make it more complete or like we have it today, from Sunday schools to State Organizations, or what have you. According to the divine records including Latter Day Revelations, see Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Doctrine and Covenants 68:4, Reorganized edition, God placed the duty of child instruction in spiritual things upon the parents. We of today have relieved them of this responsibility and borrowed the organization known as the Sunday school from Babylon to which we have intrusted our child instruction, often using non-member instructors. Then, we have our young people's organization with its full set of officers and constitution, which has brought about a separation between young and old in the church—modern inventions.

I suppose I am still overlooking some which are among us, or are in the making. I must not forget one we have up here in Michigan, known as the State Organization. This one has taken over complete control of church activities, both in local and state affairs, assuming and disregarding authority vested in all General Church appointees, appointing their own missionary at a salary of \$100 per month, paid in advance, pledging the membership for financial support—Or-

ganization funds first, General church funds secondary—none others to be asked to do any missionary work unless he be a full-fledged believer in and supporter of the program of the State Organization. Non-supporters and those who dare to take a stand against this innovation to be removed from any office of influence. This group, or break-off from the Church, will, no doubt, if any longer tolerated, be seized by some element which in the near future, will try to force, by legislation, its schemes upon the Church of Christ. That element needs a majority vote, and it has its eyes upon Michigan for the support needed, and its inner-workings are already manifest.

Brother Flint, in your article, "What we Believe" you called our attention to the physical Organization. In this you refer to the twelfth Chapter of First Corinthians, also to the Fourth Chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. In this you tried to convey the idea that these are the God-given means by which the body or church would be able to bring about or answer the purpose for which it was brought into being, even to perfecting of the Saints. Now let me ask again, "Do we really believe that," and if so, then pray tell me, "Why do we need any of these human inventions?" Have they been the means of bringing us closer together in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and have we been the recipients of greater spiritual blessings and enjoyed a greater spiritual power with God since we have incorporated these diverse system into the Church. I think I can hear a strong voice shout, "**No, verily, no!**" In one of the Latter Day Revelations we read, "And that which does not edify is not of God." In the Articles of Faith, paragraph 9, we read, "We believe that in the Bible is contained the word of God, that the Book of Mormon is an added Witness for Christ, and that these contain the fulness of the gospel—the word fulness means complete—a complete plan or blueprint for the building of the physical and spiritual structure or Church. What more do we need? By adding more to it, would make a mess of things and we sure have done it. Now read Doctrine and Covenants, chapter 42:5, God's instruction to the men of the priesthood—did they obey? For the answer please read D. C. section 83:8, Reorganized edition. Don't you think it is about time for us to shake off the coals from our garments—rid the church of all man-made systems, and be satisfied with the God-given plan—and this condemnation will be removed. Zion will then put on her beautiful garments, and this church will move forward as never before. I wonder sometimes if the time has almost come, that it will be said of us, like it was said of former-day Israel. Read Jeremiah 2:13 "for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. If this be the case, should not the watch-men upon Zion's Walls, sound the alarm and in the language of this same prophet of God, "Cry out, saying unto the people, Thus sayeth the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your soul," Jeremiah 6:16. The very things which has brought about the rejection of other religious bodies claiming to be the Church, will, also, if not cor-

rected in time, be the cause of our downfall—according to a revelation given to the church November 27, 1832. See Utah Doctrine and Covenants, section 85:6-7. It says, "The Lord will send one mighty and strong, holding the sceptre of power, to set the House in order." Don't you think some things found in the House of God at that time will be eliminated, while his own planting will remain. The Lord in time to come will prove to all men that He is well able to accomplish His purposes by His own instituted means and has no need of human means and inventions. Much more could be said, but my letter is getting lengthy. I hope it may find place where it can do the most good—it was written with the intention of saving the church from sorrow, and regret, and for the purpose of cementing the hearts and minds of the children of God whom I love, closer together, so that we can enjoy again the abundance of the blessings of Heaven as in bygone days and the good will of Him who is our Father and Creator, that God may bless his people and that we may be true to Him, so that peace and good will may again be restored to the Church is my prayer in Jesus Name.

ELDER WILLIAM POSTMA,

407 Ionia Ave. N. W.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Editor's Note:

The foregoing letter from Seventy Wm. Postma of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is gladly published, because it contains much food for thought, and we appreciate the fine spirit in which it is given.

Some of it, in fact, most of it is addressed directly to the editor in the form of questions, kindly and without rancor expressed, and we will endeavor to answer these questions in the same kindly spirit.

In answer to the direct question, when discussing the editorial in question, you say: "Brother Flint do you really believe what you said?" The answer is unreservedly and unequivocally, YES! I do believe with all of my heart that there has been a complete restoration of the early Church of Christ, in all of its parts and with the evidence and spirit connected with it. I also agree with you that any human additions or attempts to improve on the work of God would not only be superfluous, but would destroy the real purpose and intent of the Master who instituted the work in the beginning. Hence, your statement with reference to Sunday Schools, and young people's societies would be beyond argument if this statement was founded on a correct premise. But it is not, as I will show. It is absolutely true that the church as the body of Christ can and did exist WITHOUT either Sunday Schools or Young People's Societies, or any other auxiliary, as COMPONENT parts of said church, nor are these auxiliaries NOW a component part of the Church of Christ.

BUT, having admitted this, I will call your attention to the very evident fact that NEVER has the Church of Christ, in any age been throttled by steel bands nor any other type of restriction as to HOW it shall teach the gospel, or give it divine expression, whether by Sunday Schools, Young People's Societies, or what not.

The church itself, its form of organization, its principles of doctrine, its characteristics in divine recognition in the giving of the gifts of the gospel, are as unchangeable as God Himself is unchangeable. They cannot be added to nor taken from, but as to how they shall carry the work on is left to the church itself to decide. Ages, customs, national restrictions and many other things must be taken into consideration when analyzing this question. For instance, the church cannot function in exactly the same way in foreign countries, as it can in America, yet it need not change its form, organization or doctrine.

The very fact that the Apostle Paul, in his summing up of the things God set in the church as found in the last part of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians mentions "Helps," "Governments," etc., without specifying what these helps and governments might mean, proves this. In other words, "THE CHURCH," "the church," now, must function as it can, and when I speak of the church I mean the same thing you mean when you say "the church," (perfectly organized) and at work, teaching the gospel by every legitimate means, some of which we will now notice.

Here is a group of four or five active members of the church in a certain locality. They have no church local organization, they have none of the Melchizedec priesthood, but they are required to "warn their neighbors." How shall they do it? Is there anything in all holy writ that forbids them meeting together to study the word of God, a Sunday school or young people's society, if you please? No, Babylon did not start this, but we do find that Timothy went to just such a school conducted by a grandmother, and Paul found that early instruction so valuable that he commended Timothy on his good fortune, and found him a useful associate.

I can right now think of a goodly number of present flourishing local churches that had their actual beginning in a Sunday school such as I have mentioned. It has been where there were a very few members. These members started a Sunday School, they invited their neighbors in, and got them interested in the gospel. It made an opening and when the missionaries were available a goodly number attended the meetings and today there is a flourishing local church there, THAT HAD ITS BEGINNING IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL, and which perhaps never would have existed if those first few saints had not let their light shine, and reached out and brought in others. Another instrument that might be called "human" is the press, and a church paper, yet I know where there is a local church, that had its beginning because someone sent a package wrapped in an old discarded church paper, to a friend in that community. Something on this church paper attracted the attention of this friend, she read it. It impressed her, and finding the address of the publisher on the paper she wrote for literature, she read that, then she sent for the missionaries; they came and now there is a live local there. Was any of this wrong, simply because no precedent for it is found in the scriptures?

Another phase of this question is found in the stand of the church itself as to who may be members. The age limit is eight years, as a beginning. Many

children are not sufficiently alert to be ready for baptism even at eight years of age, so if there is NO CHURCH available to give instruction, (such as Timothy had), and the parents themselves may not be sufficiently acquainted with the gospel story to give the instruction, (and I fully agree with you that the parents ARE primarily the natural teachers) then these children MUST go uninstructed because it would be following Babylon if a Sunday School or Young People's Society was started to give the needed instruction? I wish you could see what Sister Flint and I saw in Wales with reference to this kind of work. They sure were a help to our work. In fact, we found them absolutely necessary.

Your experience with a so-called "state church organization," is an entirely different matter. I can readily see where the dangers you mention may ensue, because THAT takes on the nature of a CHURCH organization.

Now in closing I will call your attention to the very evident fact that there are certain things not instituted by God that is "permissible" for the church to do. For instance, Christ set up a distinctly spiritual organization. He makes no reference to material things as being a component part of the church work, yet he did not condemn the system of tithing that was in vogue in his day, and after the day of Pentecost, it seems very evident that the material interests were expressly in the hands of the apostles, and that they, (the apostles) soon found this work a burden, and "they," not the Lord said to the membership, "Choose you out seven men of good report, full of the Holy Ghost that we, (not the Lord) may appoint over this business." Here the church of Christ assumed to regulate their own material affairs. Was that wrong? And in that, the system has not always been the same. In the Church of Christ in our day we have had just one man whom we dubbed a Bishop, to care for the financial interests of the church. Then at the time we transferred over to the Church of Christ they had three Bishops, or one bishop and two counsellors. Later in about 1928 or 1929 they decided it would be more scriptural to have seven men to look after the finances, such as the apostles suggested in Jerusalem, so we did that, and you know as well as I do that it has been this propensity on the part of some of our members to make this department a component part of the Church of Christ, that has given rise to much of our contention and disunity. Yet there may be nothing wrong about it as an auxiliary.

B. C. FLINT.

A TRIBUTE TO MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day was inaugurated by a young lady in respect to her mother, if memory serves me right, and I think it a very high tribute to pay to mothers who have given so much for their children. In looking over past years of my own family of six children and sharing with them in the ups and downs of life's experiences we have learned many lessons together.

In times past when they have come trooping in from their own homes to spend the day called Mother's Day, it has been a boon to me in many after days. Of course now in times of gas shortage many get-togethers are somewhat hindered.

So many times we say we go out to meet life, but when we define life it is an animate substance and force which is all around us and it depends on ourselves how much that force effects us by our reaction to it. So with Mother's Day, if we give thanks for having had the privilege of rearing and teaching the little ones sent to our care and keeping we can feel we have played a vital part in the drama of life which will rebound to the glory of God our Creator.

When someone told Jesus the Christ that his mother wished to see him, he said, Who is my mother and my sister and my brother? He recognized all human beings as being related to him through the God within. But at the time of the crucifixion he turned to John and asked him to watch over and care for his mother. He remembered all the care and teaching she had given him through his young and tender years and she was his mother in this human plane of life.

May we all that are mothers feel glad and appreciate the blessings that come to us on the coming Mother's Day this year, and not allow ourselves to be sad and depressed because of the war and its attendant evils. For we have been told to lift up our heads and rejoice when we see these things taking place for we know our redemption draweth nigh.

I have two boys in the service and one overseas. And even though we lose our boys and girls in this terrible conflict, we will for a time be sad and depressed, it is true, but they are still in the Lord's hands and according to their faith go on and work out their allotted tasks.

As we look into the faces of beautiful flowers and feel the influence of trees there is an awesomeness that makes us feel our littleness and almost makes us afraid to stand in their presence. But we feel to give thanks for an understanding in a small way for these things.

MRS. MARCIA YATES.

7808 Clybourn Ave., Roscoe, Calif.

OBITUARY

Sister Hilda Postma

Sister Postma passed away on Wednesday, March 28, 1945, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the age of sixty years, five months and twenty-two days.

She was born October 6, 1884, at Surhuisterveen, Friesland, Netherlands. In her early life she, with her parents who were members of the Utah Church came to this country. Shortly after her arrival she met and was married to Elder Wm. Postma. To this union seven children were born, six sons and one daughter. Edward, of North Dorr, Michigan; William Jr., of Dorr Center, Michigan; Albert, of Grand Rapids, Michigan; Wesley, of Midland, Michigan; John, who is in the U. S. Army somewhere in the Pacific; Private Raymond Postma, Camp Miles Standish, Massachusetts; and one daughter, Mrs. Tom White, of New Salem, Michigan. Eleven grandchildren; two brothers and three sisters.

She united with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and was baptized January

21, 1916, by Elder J. F. Curtis, at Independence, Missouri.

In 1927, with her husband, Sister Postma transferred her membership to the Church of Christ, Temple Lot.

Sister Postma was held in high esteem by all who knew her. She was a devoted wife and mother. Her home was always open to the missionaries, and although her illness caused her to suffer untold agonies and pain, yet through it all she never complained. She had no fear of death; said she was going home to be with her Savior.

She will be sadly missed by all who knew her best. The funeral services were held Saturday afternoon, March 31, 1945, at the Hildreth Funeral Home, Grandville, Michigan. Elder James Wilkinson preached the sermon assisted by Elder John T. Reed. Interment was in the Grandville, Michigan, Cemetery.

Calm on the bosom of God
Fair spirit, rest thee now!
E'en while with ours thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.

Dust to its narrow house beneath!
Soul to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die.

Lone are the paths and sad the bowers
Whence thy dear smile is gone;
But oh! a brighter home than ours,
In heaven is now thine own.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans.

MOTHER

Did you ever go back during the summer to the little old town where you lived as a boy? And did you softly open the old iron gate and wend your way to your mother's grave?

Did you sit by the grave so dear, so far from the false parade? Did the soft summer breezes sing through the lone pine a sad requiem? And as you softly closed the old iron gate again, did your hand cling to the rusty latch while you tried to see through tears—tears from a heart that had older grown; tears that told of emotions that tugged at your very soul?

The most beautifully imagined, the most exquisitely expressed sentiment—working that I can conceive, can compose with the memory of my mother's motionless marble hands—hands that once held my heart in their hollow; hands that once bathed my fevered brow; hands that sent hope to me when all else had fled; hands that pointed to heaven while she prayed so earnestly, so devoutly for me when I needed more than earth's mercy.

Mothers never die. They live in our memory while they rest under the violet mound.

F. D. Van Amburgh, in "By the Side of the Road."