

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.”—I Nephi 3:187.

Volume 27

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Number 3

In These Small Hours

Ivan Inch

In these small hours of quietude,
I hear the voice of God;
My mind, in solemn attitude,
Hath sought the way He trod.

The whisperings of spirits kind
Bring knowledge I have sought,
To ope my eyes, that they may find
The wonder God has wrought.

In these small hours of solitude,
I see the hand of God;
Mine eyes have sought the altitude
With Him, in which to trod.

And then, in visions very plain.
He makes me understand,
That I should in myself ordain
First, to ably walk with man.

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ZION'S ADVOCATE

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INSTRUCTIONS IN ORDERING

Our quarterlies are not dated, but numbered, because they contain a regular course of study, and if the school desire to make this study, they should order the quarterlies according to number so as to avail themselves of the entire course, so far as the study has been extended up to the present time. None of the courses are, as yet, complete. This is due to lack of funds.

EDITORIAL

THE WIDE GATE

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat." Matt. 7:22.

When it comes to the question of what the "wide gate" is like, the tendency is to quickly brush away all thoughts of it, lest the picture be an unpleasant one, and cause us a mite of uneasiness, by conjuring up the scenes that are often pictured as representing the hopeless condition of the damned.

No, quite to the contrary. The wide gate offers one of the most pleasing views possible that the world can present to the mind of man. Everything about the entrance is garbed in habiliments of innocency, decency and respectability. If the end of the road could be plainly seen from the gate entrance, few would venture in.

It is not until one is well along the "broad way", well beyond the beautiful and entrancing entrance, that the awfulness of the road that leads to destruction begins to make itself manifest. And lucky is he, indeed, who catches a glimpse of the awful hell at the end of the way, before it is too late to about face, extricate himself from the heedless throng madly rushing downward, and creep back through the wide gate to safety again. All too often have men gone so far into the depths that there is no return.

That the "wide gate" would be in evidence, in a very destructive manner in the latter day, is indicated in the language of the Savior:

"But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man. For it shall be with them as it was in the days which before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."—Matt. 24:44, 45.

What a beastially low people they were in the days of Noah, one would think. How corrupt and degraded—so low in the scale of civilization that they shamed the human family. Uncouth, hateful and barbarous brutes. No wonder the gates of hell yawned to receive them. Is that the picture you have of the situation?

What a sadly mistaken thought that would be! The people of Noah's day compared favorably with the elite of today, who, like them, have forgotten God, while they follow their favorite pastimes of eating and drinking, sometimes at a hundred dollars a plate, while hundreds of thousands are on the ragged edge of starvation. Hear the kind of people they really were in Noah's day:

"And it came to pass that Noah called upon the children of men, that they would repent, but they **hearkened not unto his words.**

How typical of the world today!

"And also, after they had heard him, they came up before him, saying, "**Behold, we are the sons of God.**"

Again, how typical of the present world!

Not the cringing, polluted beasts that had become but the scum of civilization. But proud men, haughty men, boastful men; men who prided themselves on being above the average, noted men, learned men, men of distinction, even claiming to be "the sons of God." Think of all the creation in Noah's day claiming to be "sons of God," great and mighty men—all except the lowly eight, who were worthy to enter the ark. We have a close counterpart to that situation in the world today. Listen again.

"Have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men? And are we not eating and drinking, and marrying and given in marriage?"

Yes, indeed, with the best of them. Right in the upper circles. Had they forgotten God? No, indeed, say they, "We are the sons of God."

The world is full of them today. Shouting from the housetops that they are the sons of God, and followers of our Lord, while yet they pervert his holy way, and deliberately spread deception among the children of men, leading them into deceptive paths.

Hear them further:

"And our wives bear unto us children, and the same are mighty men, which are like unto them of old, men of great renown."

And what have we today? Mighty men! Yes, the mightiest men of all history, by worldly standards. Men of great renown. Yes, renowned the world over. Mighty men! Makers of the A-Bomb, the H-Bomb, the X-Bomb, and all the wonderful inventions and contraptions of our advanced age. But what was it Paul foretold about us?

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . .

"Boasters,
 "Proud,
 "Blasphemers . . .
 "Unholy . . .
 "Truce Breakers,
 "False accusers . . .
 "Fierce . . .
 "Traitors,
 "Heady,
 "High-minded,

"Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."—
 II Tim. 3:1-4.

We have them all in great numbers, and they pride themselves on being mighty men, like unto them of old, even better; men of great renown, and, even greater renown.

"And they hearkened not unto the words of Noah. And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people, saying, Hearken and give heed to my words, believe and repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, even

as our fathers did, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, that ye may have all things made manifest." (See Genesis 8:8-14, Inspired Translation.)

But they had entered through the wide gate, and were so far down the broad way, there was no recovery. No warning voice could reach them. No prophetic utterance concerning impending disaster could be heard. No inspired plea for faith and repentance and baptism could penetrate their hearts. Eight lonely souls were all that could hear and respond, of all that multitude—and even the children and grandchildren of those who responded (like the majority of children and grandchildren of today) were too far down the broad way (having "sold themselves" into the thralldom of the world) to lend an ear to the frantic pleas of fathers and grandfather. It was no use. **They would not repent.**

The world is in the same perilous condition today. It is already passed through the portals of the "wide gate", and slipping, slipping irretrievably down the broad, broad, way, unconscious and unmindful of their impending doom. Blinded by the bright lights, fascinated by the glamorous crowds, encouraged by careless, thoughtless, uncomprehending and indifferent parents, attracted and welcomed by smiling hosts and hostesses, rubbing oily hands in anticipation of greater and still greater profits, while every device and invention that the mind of man can conceive is constantly being brought into use to "keep them coming" as long as their money lasts.

In Noah's day they **knew not** till the flood came and took them all away, notwithstanding the need for faith and repentance and baptism, preparatory to entering the ark of safety had been taught, some say for 120 years, while the ark was being prepared.

They **knew not** because they **would not hear**. So today they **know not** because they **will not hear**, though faith, repentance and baptism have been proclaimed for 120 years, since the beginning of the Restoration: and is the only means of preparation for the Great Day of the Lord, soon to come, when the earth will receive its baptism of fire, as it received its baptism of water in Noah's day, when an ark was prepared for both their temporal and spiritual safety.

It is as needful to hear and obey the gospel now, as then, that we may be spiritually as well as temporally prepared for the Great Day to come.

The world today is gone clean through the "wide gate" and far down the "broad way"; but how about the Church? It cannot long flirt with the world, without being ensnared thereby.

Many of the members of the church are already entered through the "wide gate", enticed from the straight and narrow way by the bright lights beckoning to the broad way, and have drifted into the world, never to return. They are in the swirl of worldly giddiness. They cannot hear the prophet's warning cry. Parents cannot reach them—they began their training too late. Their time and attention is so fully taken up by the things the world has to offer, that the "straight gate", and the "narrow way," has no appeal whatsoever.

Many parents of the church, like many parents of the world, have even encouraged their children to enter just a little bit through the wide gate.

Many parents of the church, as well as of the world, have been careless and indifferent until it is too late. In wide-awake alarm they would now reach out and draw their children back, but they cannot reach them. They have procrastinated the day, and wasted their golden opportunity. None but an all-powerful and merciful God could shock them into sensibility and awareness of their desperate condition.

Children must be brought up from the start "in the way they should go." After they have entered the portals of the "wide gate" it is usually too late.

How much of the Church can be salvaged today? Half of it? Not in the face of the present wide-spread lethargy. It would be utterly impossible to salvage more than a fourth of those who have heard the gospel message.

Read and consider the parable of the sower in Mark, 4th chapter.

Some seed fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it. Many hear the word and recognize its verity; but the birds of prey come, win their many facilities for demanding one's attention seven days a week from early morn till midnight. Many of these attractions seem plausible and needful, and even harmless, and might under proper control be made useful; and yet they are so designed and manipulated by the world, that more and more they demand all the time and energy of those whose minds become engrossed thereby, until they fail to remember the words of life they had heard; and thus by these "legitimate" (?) worldly means he uses, "Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

And there is nothing that can take away the word sown in the heart more effectively than the blandishments of the world, and the thousands of unnecessary but marvelous attractions by which he allures.

Some seed fell in stony ground, i. e., those who had no root in themselves in other words those who had made no earnest study of the word of God, and had not developed sufficient character to withstand the forces of the adversary, and were unable to endure the persecutions for the Word's sake, and they became offended, and quit.

Also some seeds fell among thorns, and was choked out by the cares of the world, the burden of making a living, or possibly the anxiety to "keep up with the Joneses"; the deceitfulness of riches and the fear of losing them; and the lust of other things—the continual craving to enter in at the wide gate and indulge in the things of the world inside its portals—these things choke the Word until it becomes withered and unfruitful. They who once rejoiced in the gospel, and ran well for a season, and turn aside and go down the broad way.

And some seed fell on good ground, and they hear it, and receive it, and live it, bringing forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

Christ will not be able to sanctify the total membership of the church as it is today. Many are too far past the portals of the "wide gate" already, with their ears attuned to the call of the world, and cannot, and will not hear the call to come back.

And of those who are accounted "good ground", it is going to require their utmost efforts to rescue their children and their grandchildren from the wide gate, and enter with them into life.

"The time is far spent,
There is little remaining."

"Now is the accepted time. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Tomorrow may be too late. Stop! Look! and Listen! Have you slipped from the narrow path and into the broad way?"

The narrow way is so narrow, and the gate is so straight, that it is easily missed, "in the world's broad field of battle."

The multitude of today, like the multitude of Noah's day are winding down the broad way. The pitifully few are finding the straight gate and the narrow way. They cannot walk down the narrow way, and mingle with the multitude.

"Keep not the multitude, sort them with care,
Testing by purity, purging by prayer."

The entrance to the straight gate today is by the same route as in Noah's day, "Faith, repentance, and baptism." It is the only way. There is no safety in any other.

"Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any many love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: **but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**"—John 2:15-17.

The love of the world is in the broad way. Shun it.

Leon A. Gould

CONDEMNATION

Ivan Inch

Condemn me not,
Nor let me condemn,
The way, tho faulty,
Of my fellow men.

Tho large may seem the mote
That flecks his eye,
The beam that covereth mine,
Help me espy.

Rough may appear,
The surface of his soul—
Let me adhere
To things that make me whole.

Condemn me not,
Nor let me e'er condemn,
Lest, in condemning,
I myself condemn.

PERTINENT QUERIES

Dear Brother:

I see in the Advocate a Hand Book containing a requirement that those who are to be baptized into the church must be examined; and if they have left their companion for some other reason than adultery, and married another, they should not be received into the church. Is this the sin against the Holy Ghost? As "all manner of sin will be forgiven unto man, except the sin against the Holy Ghost." . . .

How about the woman at the well? Christ told her she had had five husbands, but the one she had then was not her husband, yet He offered to give her to drink of the "living water."

How about the woman that was caught in the act? Are we to cast the first stone? shut the door against them, and say, "You can't come in here; you have committed the unpardonable sin"?

Christ came to save the sinner. "Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them like snow."

We must forgive all men. God will judge the adulterer. If they were in the church, and then committed these things, it would be different. . . .

Suppose a man had left his wife for another, had children with both of them, had never before come in to contact with our church; but now wanted to repent and be baptized, what would we tell him? that he must leave his last wife and children before he could come into our church? Do you preach these things?

(The above excerpts were taken from a letter recently received, to which I replied in part as follows:

2854 McDermott, Muskegon, Mich.
January 10, 1950

Dear Brother:

Your letter of December 12 addressed to Bemidji was forwarded to me here at the above address where wife and I are making our home for the winter, having moved here the first of September, and set up light housekeeping in two rooms.

I was surprised and pleased to get a letter from you after ten or twelve years of silence, and I note that in your letter you have opened up a large field of inquiry. I do not know that I can make any satisfactory comment, or that any one can, for it seems to be a question that presents a challenge to every one.

First let me say that the Handbook as published in the Advocate Supplement is not yet adopted, but is to come up at the next conference for final study and revision, and then if the conference adopts it, to be sent out to a referendum vote.

It is true that "All manner of sin and blasphemy is to be forgiven unto man," which includes adultery, desertion, etc. At the same time, forgiveness is dependent upon "Repentance." And how is repentance to be made manifest?

"By this ye may know if a man repents: He will confess, and forsake."

And so the woman at the well who was living with a man not her husband (whether the other five had been legal or not, we are not told) was offered the "living water," as we are offered the living water, upon condition of repentance, and faith. But would you think that an exception was made in her case—others being required to repent and believe, but she would be privileged to partake of the "living water" and continue living in adultery?

Likewise the woman taken in the act. An open and shut case. She made no denial, which was tantamount to a confession. Christ said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go thy way and sin no more." He gave her opportunity to repent. The Sinai law gave no opportunity to repent. If condemned under that law the penalty was death. Christ did not condemn her to death, but gave the opportunity for repentance afforded under the law of liberty, the gospel law. But forgiveness would be contingent only upon repentance, which would mean forsaking that way of life.

Of the commandments given us as a people I quote two for the purpose of presenting examples:

"Thou shalt not steal."

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Would you want to class one of these as being better or worse, or of more importance than the other?

Now for the examples:

1. A man robs a bank of a million and hides it, is caught and spends ten years in the pen, gets out, digs up his gold, continues to live upon it, contacts the church, believes and is baptized, and continues to live upon the results of his theft. "All manner of sin being forgiven unto him." (?)

2. A man woos a lovely maid and marries her, covenanting by the most sacred vows before God and man, that he will love, honor, cherish, and protect her "until death do us part." Three months later he runs off with another woman, lives with her awhile, then takes out for parts unknown. After awhile he learns that his wife has been granted a divorce and is remarried, so he gets a divorce and marries a third woman, comes in contact with the church, and believes and is baptized, "All manner of sin being forgiven unto him," (?) While he continues to live in adultery (according to Christ's Word), enjoying to the full the results of his duplicity in breaking his marriage vows.

What about it? Should repentance be required of them, or should exceptions be made for them, and repentance taught only to those who are guilty of other than those two crimes.

Or just the second one be exempt from repentance?

These are questions that are liable to come up at the next conference, and they will bear a little study before hand.

Now, in these examples, both knew they were breaking both the laws of God and the laws of men. Both threw away their self-respect and their honor.

(Continued on Page 43)

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.

GOD'S MERCY ENDURETH

B. A. Winegar

We read in Matthew 3:18, that Jesus came to John, where he was preaching repentance, and was baptized of him. John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

And concerning this statement, we read in the second book of Nephi 13:8-12, that Nephi had a perfect understanding of why it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized of water and of the Holy Ghost:

"And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized in water? Know ye not that he was holy. But notwithstanding he being holy, he sheweth unto the children of men, that according to the flesh, he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto Him in keeping His commandments; wherefore, after he was baptized with water, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove. And again: it sheweth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou me."

Now after reading that we will understand better what Jesus meant when he told Nicodemus that he would have to be born of water and of the Spirit (see John 3:3, 5).

Now we might ask a question: If it was necessary for Jesus and Nicodemus to be baptized, can any other person, old or young, ancient or modern, from the beginning of time to the end of the Millennium and a Little Season, be saved without it?

No. For we read in Malachi 3:6, that God is unchangeable, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (see James 1:17); so also is the Son of God unchangeable, for we read in Hebrews 13:8. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever."

In Mark 13:31, we read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." (See also Luke 21:33). This being true, it will be necessary for all men, in all ages of time—making no difference who they are—to be obedient to the same requirements. For God "is no respecter of persons" they are all the same to him in all ages; or else he would be showing partiality and favoritism. But he being a just God, and no respecter of persons, and Christ "the same yesterday, today and forever," he will give every man a chance sometime, somewhere, in this life or the next; for his mercy does not end at death, as many suppose.

"His mercy endureth forever", and includes all who will turn unto him in this world or the next. Read the 136th Psalm, and note that each of the 26 verses end in the declaration that "His mercy endureth forever."

So we find the Savior going about preaching the gospel to all who would hear. But let us remember that there were not so many people who had the chance to hear him in the days of his ministry. Are they condemned because they never had the chance in life to hear him, or to hear those whom he called to preach the gospel of the kingdom?

Let us keep in mind what he told Nicodemus, John 3:3: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born . . . he cannot see the kingdom of God"—and then read verse 5 where he makes perfectly clear just what he meant. Let us keep in mind, too, the fact that Jesus had already complied with that requirement; and his Father had looked down from heaven, recognized his obedience in being baptized, and had sent down the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, to rest upon him.

After what we have learned of God's unchangeability, we must believe that he will also send down the Holy Spirit upon all those who honestly and truly obey the gospel in any age in which they have that chance. But how about those who never had a chance in life?

Do we hear some one say, Oh, those were the heathen, and those who knew no law, so they are exempt. Well, now, are they? True, it is said that the heathen, and those who knew no law, shall have part in the first resurrection. But please remember there is a vast difference between being "exempt", and coming forth in the first resurrection. Also there is a vast difference between "having part in the first resurrection" and "seeing" and "entering into the kingdom of God." It might be well to go back and read what Christ said to Nicodemus, and then remember that no man can see or enter into the kingdom of God, even though they have "part in the first resurrection," without obedience to the gospel law, here or there.

For we believe what Christ told Nicodemus, and we also believe that God is unchangeable, and Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. We will now ask another question:

How, when, and where, will all that vast number of people who did not hear in this life, have a chance to hear—for a chance they must have, or God would become a respecter of persons?

In John 5:39 we read Jesus command to "search the scriptures," and that is what we should do. I believe that command was to all, to every one who has a Bible to search—and to those who have none, it is never too early to get one.

We will begin our search by turning to Luke 16:

19-31: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come to this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Notice in reading the above scripture, Jesus said, "There was" a certain rich man—its not given as a parable—and we note that the place that the rich man was in was without water. Also there was a "great gulf" fixed between them which made it impossible for either to cross over to the other side, even if they wished to. These were Christ's own statements.

But let us continue our search. In John 12:32, 33, we read, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."

Another question:

When will this happen to **all men**?

We are told there are millions on the earth today who have never even heard there was a Christ crucified for the sins of the world. Are these, and millions of others like them who lived and died in other ages of time, going to be left out of all opportunity to hear and obey, just because they did not have a chance in this life as others did? Let us search a little farther. We read in John 5:25:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

But as some men represent God, it would appear that his mercy ends when a man or a nation goes down to the grave, or to the pit, or hell or prison house; that that is the last of them, and that they must just stay there and suffer eternal ages without end. But what does Isaiah say about it?

"For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made."—Isaiah 57:16.

Oh, yes, God knew that the souls of men could not endure that place forever; so being a God of love and mercy (which mercy endureth forever), he made plans to redeem the souls of men from the pit wherein is no water—the hell the rich man was in. David knew that, and has this to say about it:

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."—Psalm 16:9-10.

I am inclined to believe that David was privileged to look down into the future, and see what the Lord was going to do for all mankind—not just for a favored few; but that the great atonement made by Christ would reach to all mankind from the very beginning to the end of time.

In Matthew 7:13 we note the words of Christ:

"Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

It is also written that men "learn obedience by the things which they suffer," then why deny them a chance to become obedient, after a term of suffering in the prison house, that will cause them to be willing to bow the knee to Christ? We read in Matthew 5:26, Christ's statement that they shall not come out until they have paid the utmost farthing: but nowhere does he say that they cannot come out then. On the contrary prophecy has told us that they can and will, of which Peter says, in II Peter 4:20.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost."

Also, we are told in I Peter 3:18.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison"

The "Just" preaching to the "unjust", that he might bring **them** to God. Yes, the "unjust".

"Which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto **baptism** doth also now **save us**."

Baptism saves us through our repentance. It is the saving principle of the gospel of salvation. And in I Peter 4:6, we read:

"For this cause was the **gospel preached** also to

them that are dead; that they might be judged according to men in the flesh."

It seems very just and reasonable that the unjust who have died should have an opportunity to hear the gospel, and obey, and be judged by the same standards by which men in the flesh are judged.

Remember the story of the rich man and the beggar, and of the great gulf that separated them. And it was part of Christ's mission to go down there, and bridge that gulf, and preach to them. And there was in that something more than many realize; for when he gave his life on the cross and triumphed over death and hell, he then had the power to go into hell, and take away the keys of hell and of death, as you will find by reading Revelation 1:18. For he is the "mighty among the strong."

The apostle Paul had this to say in Ephesians 4:8:

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth.)"

Question: Where are lower parts of the earth? The Bible always speaks of hell as **down**. Second Peter 2:4, says the angels were cast down to hell. They were those who deliberately rebelled against God, and chose to go with Satan. They are the ones without hope.

Now let us see if we can find some "prisoners of hope." We return to Zachariah 9:11, 12:

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water. Turn ye to the strong hold ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

If you will read verses 9 and 10 you will see just who it is that is going to do this great work.

In Ezekiel 32:21, we read:

"The **strong among the mighty** shall speak to him out of the midst of hell **with them that help him.**"

Yes the strong among among the mighty is going to have plenty of help, some of which we will call to your attention later. But now we want to ask, Who is the One Strong among the Mighty? Turn to Psalm 24:8:

"Who is this King of Glory? **The Lord strong and mighty.** The Lord mighty in battle."

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison house."—Isaiah 42:6, 7.

The power that brings the prisoners out, is the gospel. For Paul says,

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to **every one that believeth**, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—Psalm 9:17.

A question at this time: Who are the wicked? Is not Israel among them? We think so. We find in reading Isaiah 49:9-10, that a command is to be issued telling those in the prison house to go forth, here it is:

"That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger or thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

And now in Isaiah 60:1, we read:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath annointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Remember that this is the same scripture that Jesus read to them in the synagogue, and said unto them: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."—Luke 4:21.

Christ has positively identified himself as the one who was to open the prison door and let those prisoners out; which he will do in his own due time and way; and thus we find the real reason why Christ had to go down into hell and take away those keys, that the "great gulf" might be bridged for those who are sent there "to help him"; and for those who would believe and repent, and come out, to be judged according "to men in the flesh."

We will now read Isaiah 14:12, where we are given a **very good description** of the devil and his evil designs:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations."

Giving special attention to verses 16 and 17, we find he would not open the door of the prison as long as he had the keys, so it became necessary for one who was stronger than he to go there and take away those keys:

"They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"

But now, thanks be to God, both the keys and the prisoners are in safe hands; and all men may have the gospel preached to them, even those in prison, and have a chance to come out some time.

John and Peter both tell us that the dead will be preached to those who are in their graves. There is in the hearts and minds of a number of people I have talked with—and I am in full accord with it—the glad

assurance that the Bible teaches that all who make themselves worthy shall **live here on this earth** and all will feel more at home here, than they would to go off to some "Island of nowhere," as some speak of it; but will remain here and live and reign with Christ. Let us read, beginning with Revelation 5:9:

"And they sung a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests, and **we shall reign on the earth**. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and **on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.**"

Also chapter 1, verse 6:

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

What are these priests for? They are going to have a lot to do. It will take all of them to do the great work which must be done during the thousand years under the leadership of Christ.

Now turning to Zechariah 13:1:

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **for sin and for uncleanness.**"

If you will make a careful study of the last three chapters of Zechariah, you will find them somewhat jumbled up, whether it was intentional, or otherwise. Nevertheless it is true that God has given, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, so that it becomes necessary to "search the scriptures" in order to understand them. By comparing with other scriptures, we are able to find a connected story in the three chapters mentioned, as follows:

"Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the

earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord thy God shall come, and all the saints with thee." —Zech. 14:1-5.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the House of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me who they have pierced.—Zech. 12:9-10.

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." —Zech. 13:6.

'And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shemei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." —Zech. 12:10-14.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."—Zech. 13:1.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one."—Zech. 14:6-9.

Reading it in this connected way, you will have a better understanding of what the prophet meant. And as to why these things are hidden in this way, read Isaiah 28:13:

"But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

The two following verses tell us it was because they were scornful men, who had made a covenant with death, and were at an agreement with hell, had made lies their refuge, and under falsehood had hidden themselves.

And now we have discovered in searching these three last chapters of Zechariah, a most full and complete account of the last great events to take place at the coming of the Savior, which events include the opening of a fountain for sin and uncleanness, that Israel might be born again, "a nation in a day."

In this connection let us remember what the two

men in white apparel said to the disciples as they saw Christ ascending into heaven:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Yes, he was taken up from the Mount of Olives, and it is to this Mount he will return, in the great events to take place of which we have read. If you are interested in a more detailed account of these events, turn and read Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, which give an account of events to take place before, at, and after His coming. He that reads should seek to understand.

After these events the Lord will set up His kingdom, and will need a vast number of servants, or kings and priests, who are sealed by Christ's power to serve Him. For mention of some of these turn to Revelation 7:4:

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

And reading the next four verses we learn that twelve thousand were sealed from each of the twelve tribes. But nowhere is there a hint that only this one hundred and forty-four thousand will be saved, as some misguided religionists teach. But to the contrary we read beginning with the 9th verse of the same chapter:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto the living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Much of the same language is used here concerning the ransomed as we found in Isaiah 49:9-10, with reference to those who were returned from the prison house.

Let me refer you now to Revelation 11:15:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

That is right. Christ will be king over all the earth, and all the righteous will be privileged to reign with him a thousand years upon the earth.

Some will say, Oh well, if I can be at a later date, that will be fine; and I can just go along with the gay crowd and have a good time, and eventually all will be well. But wait, the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, is unpardonable because it is a sin against knowledge.

He who knows the Lord's will and doeth it not shall be beaten with many stripes; for it is accounted a sin unto any one who knoweth the Lord's will and doeth it not.

If we are one of those who have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, and have a knowledge of it, this present time is our opportunity, and it is up to us to make our calling and election sure, lest we by our negligence plant the seeds of disobedience and rebellion, and we procrastinate the day of our salvation, and we find no place here or hereafter for repentance. What a price to pay! To sell our birthright as a son or daughter of God, for the mess of filthy pottage the world has to offer!

The only way to make our calling and election sure is to have faith in God, believe on His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, be baptized in water, for the remission of our sins, have hands laid upon us for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit; and then if we will continue steadfast to the end, we will be sure of our reward, for He is faithful who promised.

Sandpoint, Idaho
February 21, 1950

AWAKE! AMERICA! AWAKE!

Shall we who claim to be a "Christian Nation" sit idly by and let fear drive us into another war? I plead with all mankind, especially those of the "Christian Faith", who have studied the prophecies concerning this life and the life hereafter. It is you people who should understand what the "atom bomb" means to our civilization. If our scientists were permitted to use their scientific knowledge in research work for peace time economy instead of war economy, what a wonderful world this could be. And if we will organize a world peace mobilization, we can, through the help of God, bring peace to earth once more. To make this possible we must act now. I appeal to the ministerial association to call a special meeting in every city and hamlet, and organize a petition drive. Zone your cities and make a house to house canvass. A move of this kind would relieve our scientist and the use of these great laboratories for research work for the causes and cure of such dread diseases as heart, cancer, polio and other dread diseases that is so destructive to mankind. What shall your answer be? This is open to all peace loving people.

Respectfully,

J. M. HARTLEY,
611 North 6th Ave., Sandpoint, Idaho

PERTINENT QUERIES

(Continued from Page 37)

Both destroyed the respect and confidence of others in them, and forfeited the right to retain the respect of acquaintances, relatives, neighbors and friends.

Should they be received into the church without repentance?

Or should the thief be rejected because he stole money, and continues to live on the fruits of his theft?

And should the church receive the other because he is only an adulterer, and stole nothing except virtue, honor, love, self-respect, and the respect of all men, and destroyed them, and permit him to continue to enjoy the fruits of adultery?

In the first case, it would require that he give up his ill-gotten gains, and make restitution as far as he could, and that would break his heart. But that would manifest repentance.

In the second case, it would require that he give up his life of adultery, and make restitution as far as he could; and that would break his heart. But that would manifest repentance.

And the Lord "requires a broken heart and a contrite spirit."

Is there any way around repentance, or if one tried to get into the sheepfold without it, would that be trying "to climb up some other way?"

Now about investigating a case of that kind before baptizing. If the pastor baptizes without investigating (or even with only a personal inquiry) the result is always a dead local. It has been proved time and time again. A person living that kind of a life acquires a community-wide reputation by the thousand and one stories circulated by Madam Rumor. The Pastor may satisfy himself that the man is entitled to baptism, but he'll never be able to track down all those rumors and annihilate them. But if it be the man's request, or by mutual consent, a commission of elders investigates, and finds him worthy, it is approved by the local and the poisonous rumors nullified.

The Book of Mormon says:

"But if he repent not, he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may destroy my people, for behold I know my sheep, and they are numbered. Nevertheless ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them, and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them."—Page 653, Authorized Edition.

Then take the case of the first woman in example 2 cited above. Everybody would say she had a right to remarry. Suppose she does, and ten years later comes in contact with the church. Immediately, at the first sign of interest in the Restoration, Madam Rumor's tongues begin to wag, and a thousand and one lies are told about her desertion, divorce and re-marriage. A commission of elders investigates, arrives at the truth, the report is approved, becomes an official record, and she's freed of even the suspicion of wrong. No harm can come to her or the local through the investigation—only good for all.

A young maiden isn't adverse to all the local knowing that she is free to marry. Why should the woman

be adverse to standing in the clear light before the community to which she is entitled? And which would make it impossible for her act of obedience to the gospel to contribute to the destruction of the people of God because of a community ignorance?

You may not have witnessed the extent to which such situations can work the destruction of locals. But come with me in the mission field for six months, and you may go home a sadder but wiser man.

I remember years ago when the divorce problem reared its head in another division of the church. I was at a conference in Independence when an attempt was made to confine the church's recognition of divorce to the scriptural reason given by Christ—but, no, it couldn't be done. There were too many divorcees there, or those whose relatives were divorcees, and the effort to legislate against wide-open divorces was defeated.

One leading bishop got right up in front and said, "Why there's nothing wrong about marrying a divorced person—I married one myself."

And is that terrifically sound argument? It was right because **he did it**, regardless of what **Christ said**.

His life and action, rather than Christ's teaching, was a sound basis for conference legislation. Is that right?

When after days of discussion the vote was called, and the bishop won, and Christ was defeated, one woman got out in the aisle and expressed herself: Bro. So and So, etc., were all on your side." Joseph Luff answered, "Yes, and all the adulterers and adulteresses were on your side, too."

That was in the days when one certain state was the banner state of the Restoration, and the delegates very largely from that state. Today we see Restoration wreckage strewn all over it shattered upon the rock of marital instability and a disregard of the sacredness of the marriage covenant; until now, there is hardly a spot big enough to lay your hand but that the curse of adultery is there.

And then they have the super-gall to ask: "Why don't we enjoy the blessings of the gospel now, as we did in former days?"

It makes one wilt in shame when we hear it, as it does when we think of Judas' hypocritical question: "Lord, is it I?"

Whatever action is taken on the Handbook at the conference, it could not be retroactive. That would be impossible. There wouldn't be time enough before the coming of Christ to deal with all the present cases involved.

But is that any reason for not taking a definite stand for the future?

After all we have still a faint hope of seeing a Zion established some day; but we will never see Zion until we have been able to build groups, who, when, they look at each other across the circle, see something besides the grossest forms of life reflected in the attainments of their group.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," must have a pertinent application in the lives of those forming any group who may wish to work together for the establishment of Zion.

It is said, "A man can live without self-respect; but a group shatters, dispersed by the ugliness it sees reflected in itself."

I don't know how anything could be truer than that. No power can hold a group together if, as they face each other around the group circle, there is reflected ugliness in the way of adultery, stealing, lying, backbiting, scandal, distrust, hatred and heresy, with false revelations which usually come as an aftermath of adultery. To succeed, the group must some time get to the place where it can reflect the finer things of life in ever increasing abundance.

I am sorry your numbers are few there; but we find that true in many places. And in some chief reason is that unrepentent people were brought in who "destroyed my people." Some, unable to endure it, quietly sold out and moved; some sat down and became inactive; some turned away in disgust, until finally the pastor and his unrepentant convert were about all that was left.

But we do have a few small groups left that are earnestly and humbly trying to serve God with lowliness of heart, and these we hope to save.

As to what I teach, it matters little unless it is in accord with scripture:

Christ said:

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."—Matt. 5:32.

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery."—Matt. 19:9.

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."—Mark 10:11, 12.

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."—Luke 16:18.

"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—Mark 10:6-9.

Paul taught:

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free

from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."—Romans 7:2, 3.

"And to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord,, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."—I Cor. 19:1.

And Jacob taught:

"Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none."—Book of Mormon, Page 172, Authorized Edition.

Joseph the Seer:

"Whoso forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man: wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made."—Book of Commandments 52:16, 17.

"Behold, verily I say unto you, that whatsoever persons among you having put away your companions, for the cause of fornication, or in other words, if they shall testify before you, in all lowliness of heart, that this is the case, ye shall not cast them out from among you.

"But if ye shall find that any persons, have left their companions, for the sake of adultery, AND THEY THEMSELVES ARE THE OFFENDERS, and their companions are living, they shall be cast out from among you.

"And again I say unto you, that ye shall be watchful and careful, with all inquiry, that ye receive none such among you, if they are married.

"And if they are not married, they shall repent of all their sins, or ye shall not receive them."—Book of Commandments 47:21-24.

To my mind the above teachings all harmonize and are in perfect accord.

I know of no greater authority to which to go for council and instruction, in any age of the world.

I know of nothing that I can add or take away from the above scriptures to make them better.

I pray God I may always be found preaching in harmony with these sacred scriptures.

There are some things the church has no right to forgive. But God may forgive in his own way and time.

On the other hand the law of the land may legalize mercy murder, wholesale plunder, licensed gambling, prostitution, selling of intoxicants and narcotics for the sake of gain, and legalized adultery under the guise of man's assumption that he is fully qualified to cut asunder that which God has joined together, with a thin veil of an unscriptural divorce, but that does not

mean that the church must follow, or is justified, in following in the wake of their wickedness, or in being like they were in the days of Noah, "marrying and giving in marriage," freely, wherever and whenever fancy led, without restrain or curb, but as lust led the way, with minds as changeable as the wind—here today and gone tomorrow.

No, I wouldn't tell a man who had married a second or third wife, and had children by them all (or had none for that matter) that he would have to leave any or all of them in order to be saved. I'd tell him the truth about God's love and justice, and that his "MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER," and that while he had messed himself up with obligations that as a man he must fulfill, soon or later those ties would be dissolved and whether in this world, or in the world to come, he could be obedient to the gospel, and enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

I would erect no bar to his entering the Kingdom of Heaven, when the time came (in this life or the next) that he could qualify. Neither would I consign him to the prison house; but with those whom Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," And yielding to that drawing power, it would draw him, as it did the thief on the cross, right into the portals of paradise, where he could find the fruits of repentance, be taught, and perfected, and have access to that "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness."—Zechariah 13:1.

Thus would he be saved, and the people of the Lord, too, who otherwise would be destroyed by his coming into the church, and continuing in their presence, and with their knowledge, to live in adultery before them.

And as the Book of Mormon says, he "should not be cast out of our synagogues or places of meeting," but shall be taught and nourished on the good word of God, until the time came that he could "turn unto God" with full purpose of heart, and God would heal him."

Some things must be left in the hands of God.

I will be glad to hear from you again, and trust that we may meet at the coming conference, and help to lift the church to a higher plane of living.

With best wishes for health and prosperity for the the New Year, I am,

Yours in gospel bonds,

Leon A. Gould

OFFICIAL NOTICE

To Whom It May Concern:

This will certify that Elders Vernon Peacock, Richard Hoskins, and F. E. Hoskins were found guilty of teaching heresy by a Court of Elders convened February 26, 1950, and were disfellowshipped from the Church, and placed under permanent silence as of that date.

Also Elder Atwood Shelley, has withdrawn from the Church, and his letter of withdrawal was accepted by unanimous vote of the Muskegon Local, February 2, 1950.

The above named brethren are, therefore, no longer affiliated with the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and have no ministerial rights to function in any of the ordinances of said Church.

Signed,
LEON A. GOULD,

Missionary in Charge of Michigan
and the Northeastern States.

Dated, Muskegon, Michigan, February 26, 1950.

TEMPLE LOT DECISION

(Copied from "Federal Reporter," Volume 70, beginning at page 182.)

(City Hall, Buffalo, New York)

United States Circuit Court of Appeals
and the Circuit and District Courts.

Church of Christ at Independence, Mo., et al

No. 516

vs.

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Lawyers for the Appellants—(Church of Christ):
C. O. Tichenor, John N. Southern.

Lawyers for the Appelles—(Reorganized Church):
Frank Hagerman, and E. L. Kelley. (P. P. Kelley, L. Traber, and George Edmunds, on the briefs.)

Before Caldwell, Sanborn, and Thayer, Circuit Judges.

Thayer, Circuit Judge, after stating the case as above, delivered the opinion of the court:

The first question that deserves consideration is whether by the allegations of its bill and the evidence offered to support it, the plaintiff corporation (hereinafter termed the Reorganized Church) succeeded in showing that it was vested with such a title to the premises in controversy as was adequate to maintain the action and to recover the possession of the property from those who were then holding and occupying it. The plaintiff corporation was organized on June 6, 1891, at Lamoni, Decatur County, Iowa, under the general laws of the state relating to "Corporations other than those for pecuniary profit." McClain's Ann. Code Iowa 1888, pp. 413, tit. 9, c. 2. At the date of its organization as a corporation (according to the allegations of the bill) the legal title to the premises in controversy was vested either in the heirs of George A. Blakeslee, a former bishop of the Reorganized Church, or in E. L. Kelley, his successor in office. It was so vested by virtue of the deed said to have been executed by Marie Louise Johnson and her husband on June 9, 1887, whereby they undertook to convey the premises in dispute to said George A. Blakeslee, bishop, and to his successor in office, as trustee, in trust, for the use and benefit of the Reorganized Church, according to the laws and usages of the same. The bill of complaint was obviously framed on the theory that this latter deed vested in George A. Blakeslee, as bishop of the Reorganized Church, upon the trust aforesaid, the title originally, conveyed by Elder Partridge to the three minor chil-

dren of Oliver Cowdery by his deed of March 28, 1839, because said Marie Louise Johnson was the only surviving heir of said children in whom the title in trust had become vested by descent, the plaintiff church, so far as the proof shows, took no step before the institution of this suit to acquire the legal title thus vested in the heirs of George A. Blakeslee, or in the present bishop of the Reorganized Church, by the deed of Marie Louise Johnson and her husband.

It is contended, however, that such action was unnecessary, for the reason that the articles of association adopted by the members of the Reorganized Church on April 6th, 1891, operated to vest the plaintiff corporation with an equitable title to the premises, on the strength of which title it could oust adverse occupants of the land and recover the possession thereof by suit in equity. We think that this position is untenable. A complainant who has only an equitable title to land cannot maintain a suit in chancery to recover the possession of the land from the adverse occupant, unless such occupant holds the legal title and the complainant seek to obtain it; or unless the adverse occupant acquired possession of the land under the alleged equitable title, or is so connected therewith that it may be asserted against him. *Russell V. Gregg*, 113 U. S. 550, 554, 5 Sup. Ct. 631 and cases there cited. None of these latter conditions appear to exist in the present case. According to the averments of the bill, the person in whom the legal title is now vested in trust for the members of the Reorganized Church is not before the court. The bill does not conceive that the defendants who are in possession, and who are holding the premises in dispute under the conveyance of the heirs of Edward Partridge to James Pool under date May 5th, 1848, have any title to the premises, either legal or equitable. On the contrary, it was expressly averred in the bill that, at the time of the conveyance to James Pool, (the widow and children of said Partridge had no ownership in said land, nor any interest in trust), besides it was alleged by the plaintiff corporation, and the Circuit Court so found, that James Pool was no an innocent purchaser from the Partridge heirs, and that all subsequent purchasers of the Pool title bought with notice of that fact.

This placed the defendants in the attitude of mere trespassers upon the premises in controversy; and according to the rule last stated, they could not be ousted of possession by proceeding in equity at the instance of a suitor, who at most only claimed an equitable interest in the property which was acquired by the incorporation of the Reorganized Church in a foreign state. Whether such an act of incorporation had the effect of transferring to the plaintiff corporation an equitable interest in the premises in controversy, the same being land situated in a foreign state, we need not stop to inquire; for, in our opinion, the equitable interest so acquired, whatever may have been its nature, was not sufficient to support an action for the recovery of the possession from an adverse occupant who claimed under an independent title, to-wit under the conveyance to James Pool made by the heirs of Edward Partridge on May 5, 1848, and who denied the existence of the trust said to have been declared or created by the deed of Edward Partridge to the Cowdery children of date March 28, 1839. Under the pleadings and the evidence, the situation, is briefly as follows:

The plaintiff corporation alleges, in effect, that the legal title to the premises is now vested in the heirs of George A. Blakeslee or in E. L. Kelley, the present bishop of the Reorganized Church, in trust for the use and benefit of the latter church, and that said Reorganized Church is the legitimate successor of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints in whose favor a trust in the premises was originally created, because the members of said Reorganized Church hold the same faith and practice the same rights. On the other hand, the defendant aver that they purchased the property from persons who owned the Pool title, and that the legal title to the premises is now well vested in Richard Hill, in trust for the use and benefit of the Reorganized Church, to-wit, the Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri. The defendants also deny the authenticity of the deed said to have been executed by Edward Partridge on March 28, 1839, in favor of the Cowdery children. They also deny the existence of the trust thereby declared or created.

The case, therefore, is not one where the title to church property is undisputed and the trust upon which it was originally conveyed is admitted, and a controversy has arisen between rival church factions as to which is the proper beneficiary of the trust,—a controversy growing out of the fact that one or the other faction has abandoned the original faith or has altered the form of church government. In such cases, no doubt, a court equity has jurisdiction to inquire into matters of faith and discipline, and to determine, in view of such inquiry, who is the proper beneficiary, and, as such, entitled to use, custody, and control of the church property. But in the suit at the bar the respective parties assert different legal titles held by different persons upon different trusts, or for the use of different religious sects or congregations. The most important question presented by the record would seem to be whether the legal title now said to be held by the heirs of George A. Blakeslee or by E. L. Kelley, his successor in office, for the use and benefit of the Reorganized Church, is superior to the legal title said to be held by Richard Hill in trust for the Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri; and that is a question which should be determined by a court of law. Moreover, it would seem that the settlement of that question will, at the same time determine upon what trust, if any, the property in controversy is now held.

There is another reason, we think, why a court of equity ought not to lend its aid at that date to enforce the trust declared by the alleged deed of Edward Partridge to the children of Oliver Cowdery, deceased. That deed, although it purports to have been executed and acknowledged by Partridge in the month of March, 1839, was not recorded until February 7th, 1870, prior to which latter date no one seems to have been aware of its existence. The original deed, which is quoted in full in the margin, was not produced at the trial of the case; and the evidence failed to show who had possession of the same, or whether it was still in existence. The land embraced by the description in that conveyance is a tract containing about 63 acres, which is now situated in the heart of Independence, Missouri. The eight lots in controversy in this suit, which contains altogether about two and one-half acres, are part of the 63 acre tract, and are referred to in the deed as the "Temple Lot." The deed for the same property that was

executed by the widow and children of Edward Partridge on May 5th, 1848, was filed for record and was recorded in Jackson County, Missouri on June 16th, 1848. It purports to convey to James Pool, for an expressed consideration of \$300.00 a tract of land described by meets and bounds, containing 63.43 acres. This tract was subsequently subdivided into five additions to the city of Independence, Missouri, by persons who claimed title to the same under the conveyance to James Pool of date May 5th, 1848. The first of these additions, which embraces the lots in controversy, was made by Woodson and Maxwell, by a plat duly filed and recorded as early as March 31st, 1851. Two other additions were carved out of the tract, and plats thereof were filed in the year 1866 and 1868. The residue of the tract became additions to the city by plats which were approved by the city authorities and filed during the years 1886 and 1887, respectively. Since the tracts thus subdivided into additions, and attached to the city of Independence, hundreds of persons have bought lots therein, reliance on the Pool title.

Streets and alleys have been opened through the tract and many buildings and other improvements have been erected, at great expense to the numerous occupants of the property. These improvements began, as it seems, long prior to the date of 1870, and have been continued without interruption to the present date. The record further shows that the lots in controversy became the subject matter of a suit partition between their heirs of John Maxwell, deceased, and Samuel H. Woodson, in the year 1859; and that, by virtue of the decree in that suit, said lots were subsequently exposed for sale and some of them actually sold and conveyed to the respective purchasers. It should be stated in this connection that John Maxwell purchased the Pool title to the 63 acre tract originally owned by Edward Partridge as early as August 3rd, 1848. He entered to a contract with Samuel H. Woodson in February, 1851, by virtue of which the latter acquired an interest in the property; and, after the death of Maxwell and after the laying out of Woodson's and Maxwell's addition, Woodson brought the aforesaid suit in partition against the heirs of Maxwell, resulted in the decree of partition last mentioned and in a judicial sale of the premises in controversy. Evidence shows that the title asserted by the defendant to the lots in controversy was acquired by Granville Hedrick, as trustee of the Church of Christ, from John H. Hedrick and wife, and from William Eaton and wife, on November 8th, 1869, and on November 5th, 1877, subsequently, as alleged by the defendant in their answer. John H. Hedrick and William Eaton appear to have acquired their respective titles to the lots in controversy through persons who purchased the lots in the partition sale aforesaid under decree in the case of Samuel H. Woodson vs. the heirs of John Maxwell, deceased. The title thus asserted by the defendants under the Pool deed of May 5th, 1848, is the same paper title, so far as the record discloses, under which every lot of land lying within the 63 acre tract originally owned by Edward Partridge is now held by the numerous persons, who, during the last 30 years, have settled on the tract and have erected improvements thereon. Moreover, it is the only record title that was generally recognized as conferring any interest in said tract of land for more than 40 years before the present suit was instituted.

The claim, therefore, which is now preferred by the plaintiff church under the deed of March 28, 1839, to the minor children of Oliver Cowdery, operates as a cloud upon the title to the entire tract. It is, doubtless, true that many of the occupants of the property in question, whose titles are clouded by the present litigation, could put to the test, show a good title to the respective lots of land by them occupied by adverse possession for more than 10 years; but as is well known, the improvement of property is frequently delayed or prevented, and the market value thereof is often seriously impaired, especially if, as in this instance, it is city property, by a cloud cast upon the record title, which can only be removed by proof of adverse occupancy for the period necessary to confer a title by the statute of limitations. It is also significant fact that from the year 1867 to the present time, the two trustees of the defendant church, to-wit, Granville Hedrick and Richard Hill and persons under whom they claim title, have paid all the taxes that have assessed against the several lots now in controversy. The taxes so paid amount to a considerable sum. In the meantime no one seems to have questioned the title under which the trustees claimed to hold said property, or their right of occupancy, until June 11th, 1887. At the latter date a notice was served on the defendant, Richard Hill, by George H. Blakeslee, acting as bishop and trustee of the Reorganized Church, requiring him to cease making further improvements on the property in controversy and surrender the possession to the Reorganized Church. The suit at bar to enforce this demand was not commenced, however, until five years thereafter, to-wit on August 6th, 1891. It is also a noticeable circumstance that, some years before commencement of the present suit (but how long before, the evidence does not definitely disclose), a congregation of the Reorganized Church erected a house of worship at Independence, which is situated across the street from the lots in controversy, and entirely outside of the 63 acre tract originally owned by Edward Partridge, which is now claimed to be held in trust for the use and benefit of the Reorganized Church.

In view of the foregoing facts, we think the plaintiff church and those whom it claims to represent have been guilty of such laches as should bar them from all relief in the form of equity even though it appeared that the premises in controversy were originally held in trust by Edward Partridge for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and even though it appeared that the Reorganized Church is at this date the legitimate successor of the original beneficiary. It behooves all persons who claim an interest in real property which is situated in a large town or city, and rapid coming into demand and appreciating in value, to be active and vigilant in the assertion of their rights thereto. A person claiming an interest in such property cannot remain silent and inactive for a long period while third parties are buying, selling, improving, and otherwise dealing with the property as their own, in reliance on a record title that is perhaps defective, and not be permitted to assert his claim thereto in a court of equity. Courts of equity will not take such action as will decree a title that has been dealt in for years and recognized as valid, and on the validity of which the fortunes of many persons may depend, unless their aid is invoked by a suitor who shows a clear

equitable right, or unless he has been diligent in making his rights known and prompt in seeking relief when they were invaded. It is hardly necessary to observe that this is a firm equitable rule, founded upon sound considerations of public policy, which have been frequently stated and applied, especially by the federal courts.

It is urged, however, that the plaintiff church and those persons in whose behalf it sues, are not guilty of laches for three reasons. First, because the founder of the trust and his adherents, commonly called "MORMONS" were driven out of the State of Missouri in the year 1838 and 1839 by military force, and found it dangerous to return; second, because the defendants and those through whom they claimed have not occupied the lots in controversy continuously for a period of ten years since their title thereto had its inception; and third, because the suit is one to enforce the provisions of an express trust. We think that none of the reasons so assigned can be deemed a sufficient excuse for the failure to institute this proceeding at an earlier day. More than twenty years elapsed after the deed of Edward Partridge to the Cowdery children was filed for record in Jackson County before the bill of complaint in the present suit was filed, and during that period no obstacle seemed to have stood in the way of a speedy assertion of the same title and claim to the property in controversy that is now asserted. It admits of no doubt, we think, that it was as well known in 1870 as it is now that the entire tract of land originally owned by Edward Partridge embraced the lots in controversy, was then held by numerous persons who claimed to be the absolute owners of the property under the conveyance executed by the heirs of Edward Partridge to James Pool on May 5th, 1848. The larger part of the tract had already been platted as additions to the city of Independence, Missouri. A portion thereof, including the lots in controversy, had been partitioned and sold in the suit between Samuel H. Woodson and the heirs of John Maxwell, deceased; buildings and improvements had been erected, or were shortly thereafter erected, on all parts of the tract. While there may have been flaws in the record title of those thus claimed to own the lots in controversy and other portions of the tract, yet the acts aforesaid amount to a denial of the alleged trust and they were of such character that they should have inspired prompt and decisive action on the part of those who claim to be beneficiaries of the trust as soon as they discovered authentic evidence of their alleged rights. We conclude, therefore, that, in view of the open denial of the trust for more than twenty years, the members of the Reorganized Church have acquiesced too long in the assertion of adverse rights to the property in controversy to be now heard to complain, even if we should concede that they were not guilty of laches before the deed to the Cowdery children was discovered and placed on record, and before the alleged trust affecting the property became generally known.

With reference to the contention that laches is not available to the defence to this action because the defendants have not occupied the premises in controversy continuously for a period of ten years since the inception of their title, it seems sufficient to say that the plea of laches is frequently available in equity even when the defendant has not been in possession of the prop-

erty sued for, for a sufficient period to confer a title by the statute of limitations. Under a variety of circumstances, especially where property has rapidly appreciated in value, or it has been improved by those in possession, or where the rights of third persons will be seriously affected by a decree, courts of equity will refuse to interfere even when the facts are such that the plea of the statute of limitations could not be maintained at law. This principle applies in suits to enforce an expressed trust, where trust has been openly denied, as well as in suits to enforce a constructive trust. In the case at bar it is conceded that, besides paying taxes on the property, the defendants built a church on the lots in suit in the year 1882 and they have occupied it continuously since that date as a house of worship. No notice of an existing adverse claim to the property was given to the defendants while the structure in question was being erected, nor for more than five years thereafter, although as it seems, a congregation of the Reorganized Church occupied another church edifice in close proximity to the premises, and were doubtless well aware of the improvements that were being made on the property in controversy. Besides, the title by which the defendants claim to hold the lots in suit is the same title by which a much larger tract of land within the city of Independence has apparently been held for more than forty years, and the relief prayed for as against the defendants, cannot be granted without impairing the value and clouding the record title to much other valuable property situated within the city. Under these circumstances, we think that laches is a good and sufficient defence to the action, even though the defendants did not actually occupy the lots in controversy for the full term of ten years before this suit was commenced.

In accordance with the views herein expressed, the decree of the Circuit Court will be reversed and the cause will be remanded, with directions to dismiss the bill of complaint.

"United States Reports" Volume 163, page 681. October term, - 1895.

"No. 849. Church of Christ vs. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Petition for a writ of certiorari to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. January 27, 1896: Petition denied. Mr. Smith McPherson and Mr. Frank Hagerman for the petitioner. Mr. C. O. Tichenor opposing."

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbitteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor."—Psalm 15:1-3.

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.—Luke 21:24.