

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.

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Thanksgiving

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.

I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole souls have power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another;

I say unto you, that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and art preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move, and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another;

I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole soul, yet ye would be unprofitable servants.

Now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

And secondly: he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you, for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore, he hath paid you.

And ye are still indebted unto him; and are, and will be, for ever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?"

—King Benjamin
Mosiah 1:49, 52-55, 57-60.

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ZION'S ADVOCATE

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EDITORIAL

As the month of November ushers in the season of harvest and we begin to reap the results of the labor of plowing, planting and cultivating; we are brought to the realization that there were more factors over which we had no control, bringing to pass these results, than those which were ours to determine. Sunshine, rain, wind, warm earth, short nights and long days, were all of more effect and value than the initial preparation of the fields, though I do not wish to minimize the importance of this factor in the least.

What is of great and essential importance is that there is a "harmony of sequences" brought about by the One who prepared the earth for man's habitation; "—God himself that formed the earth and made it, he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited:—" Isaiah 45:18.

It is only when we align ourselves with these forces of harmony that our labor bears fruit, to ignore them brings disaster. There is a term used in the electrical profession that expresses this alignment called synchronization. When putting an electrical generator "on the line" where it can add its product of electricity to the system of which it is a part, it is necessary to find the phase and frequency of the master generator, its very heart beat, and bring the new generator into exact synchronization or harmony with it before closing the switches. Otherwise there is a "bump" and the new generator is kicked off the line. When the true harmony is found the new generator joins the system smoothly, picks up its load and adds its bit to the total.

Is it too much to suppose that God's great universe is controlled in a like harmonious manner? When we see the results in the harvest we know that it is so, and our heart is filled with thanksgiving that a benign Creator so rules and overrules that we may become a part of that harmony.

It is little wonder then that at this season of the year we are made conscious of this great power and strive to express our gratitude for its friendly intervention.

Gratitude is a noble sentiment, it makes glad the hearts of those who have given, and lightens the hearts of those who have received. How minute would be our concept of the greatness of God if our hearts could not overflow with gratitude for His goodness.

Many times we have sung the old hymn, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." Certainly God expects us to have a thankful heart and the Holy Writ teaches us "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High;" Psalms 50:14. Paul also admonishes us, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thess. 5:18.

Everyone capable of thought can find many things in their lives that evoke gratitude from the depths of their hearts. Jessomyn West said: "The minute one begins to examine one's life, to discover what makes it good, one speaks of love."

God's love for mankind has brought so many blessings into our lives that we are apt to forget His sustaining hands and begin to take for granted all the benevolent laws of nature established for our welfare.

Not forgetting to be thankful to our Creator for the harmony of the seasons that bring the golden harvest of Autumn, let us go on to other things for which we should be humbly grateful. My list can not be complete, it may omit many things that are at the very top of your's, but it will provide a basis for us to draw together in grateful praise of our Most High God.

Let us be thankful for: The Son of God, given in love to atone for the sins of man.

The Gospel of Christ, which is yet not His but the Father's who sent Him. A gospel which outlines our duties to God and our fellow men, which shows us the way to life eternal and becomes an anchor for every storm on life's sea.

The love of family; which love gives life zest and meaning and becomes an impregnable fortress for the heart's retreat.

The love of friends and fellowship with those who share our ideals and dreams, which multiplies our common strength.

For service; that enables us to express in action our reaction to this abundant love in our lives.

For each new morning; that gives us the chance to begin our lives anew each day.

For courage; to admit mistakes and forsake error, he who cannot or will not admit his mistakes cannot improve, nor take the next step forward.

For health, spiritual, mental and physical! that makes it impossible for us to remain quiescent and provides the growth that will bring us to full maturity of the understanding of the goodness of God.

For prayer, and the approach it gives us to God, a man on his knees cannot long remain arrogant or egotistical.

For pain and sorrow; that reminds us of our own weaknesses and teaches us patience and compassion and washes our souls of indifference.

For burdens to bear; that our strength may increase with our humility.

For all that exposes our own weak limitations and forces us to rely on God.

For America and Freedom; of all peoples we should be most thankful—a land of plenty—a land of opportunity—a land at peace—a nation with a preponderant Christian Conscience. How much more we have today than our Pilgrim Fathers who held the first Thanksgiving Day, whose loved ones weakened and died for the want of a little corn.

For life, and the inescapable responsibilities that attend this condition.

For all the special individual blessings of which we alone have knowledge and for which we should give thanks not once a year but every day of our lives.

For the divine harmony; that causes the soul of man to vibrate to the mystic music that comes only to those who are in tune with God, and brings them the serene conviction that God is indeed our loving Father.

The only lasting "Thank-you-God" that we can ever give is a life of service to others. This Thanks-living is our best Thanksgiving. If we will pause to think, we will have cause to thank.

"If anyone should give me a dish of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how it would draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction.

The unthankful heart, like fingers in the sand, discovers no mercies, but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessing; only the iron in God's hand is gold."—H. W. Beecher.

Ten lepers stood afar off and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus Master have mercy on us." Jesus saw them and told them to "go shew yourselves unto the priests." This they did and were cleansed. One of them, a Samaritan, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God and fell on his face at Jesus' feet giving Him thanks. Jesus asked, "were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"

We would all be a happier people if we followed the admonition: "Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving, and into His court with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name." Psalm 100:4.

Sad indeed our lot if we are counted among the nine.

O. A. C.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." Ps. 107:1.

SO GREAT A SALVATION

By Harvey Seibel (Phoenix, Ariz. 1957)

Text: Heb. 2:3.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? Often I have mentioned to people that I would like to live forever, throughout all eternity, and I have received some surprising answers. Some have told me that they would be bored with eternity but the Scriptures tell us that the mind of man cannot conceive of the good things God has prepared for those who serve him. I have perfect confidence that these things are great enough that I will never tire of them.

I judge from my own experience—when I am in perfect health and my mind is clear, the most common place things of life are of interest to me and things like a beautiful sunrise or sunset, mountains and streams that God has made for us to enjoy, have endless pleasure for me. But when I am in poor health they all mean nothing to me. So I am certain that if we enter into the next life in perfect spiritual health, this great salvation will never become monotonous to us but will indeed have endless pleasure for us. For Christ gave up temporarily the wonders and glories of heaven to come to this earth, walk the streets of Jerusalem and the shores of Galilee, and partake of the common trials and temptations to which we are subject, finally to die in great agony upon the cross—to purchase for us so great a salvation. How dare we count this as naught—when the Son of God gave His life that we might attain it.

But we tend to neglect this salvation by various means, and one of them is through apathy. We listen with approbation to the voice of the radio telling us to go to the church of our choice. As if they are all right, as if all roads lead to heaven, as all roads led to Rome. But this is not true. Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat, but strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it. All these churches cannot be right for they teach various doctrines and various Gods. And the Apostle Paul says: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And the church in the final day is described as teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, and the men who teach the commandment of men shall have their works burned as if by fire.

Rev. 3:16 says: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This is God speaking, I believe Him to be an authority in the field—I will accept His word.

Some time ago in Chicago the students and teachers in a ministerial school were asked the questions: Is Christ truly the Son of God and did He rise from the dead? Fifty per cent of the students and forty per cent of the ministry denied this fact. How could they have anything but apathy toward so great a salvation, for we are told that there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved except in the name of

Jesus Christ. Yet they do not accept Him. They above all men are most miserable.

There are others who say they are not interested in doctrines taught by Christianity, different modes of baptism, the laying on of hands, the various rewards etc. They are not interested in finding out whether these things are true or false. They like perhaps to take the attitude of the Quakers that these things are merely the outward sign of inward grace and if you have inward grace the outward sign is unimportant. But the outward sign is important. God has layed down certain regulations and it is not for man to change them.

Another way we neglect this great salvation is through ignorance. We take the attitude of Martha, being too busy cooking and cleaning the house, regulating our own affairs, making a living, to be too interested in our soul salvation. Martha complained to Jeuss because Mary didn't come to help her but Jesus said Mary had chosen the better part. We are told that a man who refuses to support his family is worse than an infidel and to some that becomes the end of their religion. These things are important but secondary. We are to seek first the kingdom of God and the other things are incidental to this great plan.

Some think that if we sin ignorantly that God is good and just to forgive us, but this merely another form of excuse—ignorance cannot be made a blanket excuse. Romcans 2:12-14 tells us that because God is just He does not hold man accountable for ignorance he is unable to prevent. A people who have had no ministry sent to them but live according to the best of their knowledge, they will receive as great a glory as any of the rest of us, for they do the best they can with what they have. Yet we must atone for our sins of ignorance. In Numbers 15:27-28 under the law of Moses the people had to atone for sins of ignorance by sacrificing to the high priest. And since Christ is our High Priest today, we must answer to Him. No one of us is free of this type of sin. We have the Bible and the Book of Mormon and modern revelations and if we remain ignorant of what they contain for our good—we will certainly be held accountable for our ignorance.

Yes we have the written word. We may say I'm but a small pebble on the beach—my time is taken up with the ordinary things of life—I must work—I will follow religious leaders of the time—I don't have time to study. Many people believe in doing just that. But we are told in Jer. 17:5: "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." There are over fifteen hundred denominations in the world, the more wicked the Nephites became the more churches they built. Yes it takes more than churches to gain this salvation.

We are told: cursed is he who trusteth in man, how about the great men of the Bible? They too went astray. David who was a man after God's own heart became a murderer and a pologamist. Solomon who was called of God, and God himself came to Him twice

and talked to him—yet he became sinful and his many wives led his heart away from God. Yes even the prophets of God go astray and if we trust in the false prophets we will be accursed too.

Another way we can neglect so great a salvation is through weakness. Often we say our temptations are too many and too hard for us to bear. I Cor. 10:13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

How can we attain this salvation? First and greatest principle is Faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But we are told that the devils also believe and tremble—so there is more to do besides have faith. We must be baptized. "Jesus answered Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5.

Some ministers tell the people they must come to the altar—down the old sawdust trail—give their heart to God and be saved. There is nothing in my Bible that tells me salvation is a thing of a moment—it is not just promising but living. Matt. 24:13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." This same thought is repeated many times in the Bible—which makes it important. Faith and the old sawdust trail are not sufficient.

We can do great things through faith but we should not be lifted up in pride for we can still fall into sin. Moses led his people for forty years in the wilderness and performed many miracles but he erred and because of his sin he was not permitted by God to enter into the promised land. Neither can we break God's commandments and expect to win salvation. We have the story of Uzzah in II Samuel. He put forth his hand to steady the holy Ark of God after being warned not to touch it and he was struck dead for his error. God cannot compromise with evil even though he is a God of love. We must adhere to His commands exactly as He lays them down.

In Matthew we find the beautiful story of Christ when He walked on the waters and when His disciples saw Him they were afraid and thought He must be a spiirt. But Christ spoke to them and said: "It is I, be not afraid." And Peter wanted to walk on the water too and Christ bid him come. He did walk on the water but he became afraid and began to sink and cried out to Jesus to save him. And Jesus stretched forth His hand and said unto him: "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" In this life when we are about to sink in the troubles that engulf us—if we will reach out and take Christ's hand He will lift us—And we can hear His voice echoing down through the ages: "Wherefore didst' thou doubt, O thou of little faith?"

When we are tempted to be harsh towards those who have abused us—when we are tempted to join in sins because those about us do—when these times come, we should pause and ask: should we risk so great a salvation for momentary pleasure? Are the pleasures of sin for a season, worth more to us than so great a salvation? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

NOTICE

As missionary in charge of Minnesota, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, I wish to notify all concerned that I have appointed Elder Thomas Maley, who is pastor of the Minneapolis local, as my associate in charge of the above mission, in order that those closer to Bro. Maley's abode who need Gospel services can contact Bro. Maley. If necessary he can contact me.

Feel free to contact either of us if or when in need.

In Gospel Bonds,

Elder T. J. Jordan
142 Pioneer Village.
Regina, Sask.

Bro. Maley's address is:

615 Sheriden Ave. N.
Minneapolis
Minn.

Phone: JO 8-1919

LETTER TO ADVOCATE

Dear Friends of the Church of Christ:

I would like to share with you an experience that has been a great blessing and comfort to me for the past few years . . . a proof to me that in the spiritual things, distance has little importance.

Several years ago I had a vivid dream from which I awakened in a state of great happiness. In the dream I was visiting with a sister I had newly met. I knew she was from somewhere in Great Britain. We became dear friends, and had for each other the love that sisters in the Church can know for each other. This made such an impression on me that I felt I should do something about it, perhaps write someone to see if there was some such sister I should write to. But I did nothing.

Within a short time I was happy to receive a letter from a sister I had never heard of, in Wales, Mrs. Elizabeth Jones. She had heard of me through some things I had written for children in a church paper. From that time on we have written to each other. Much as I would like to meet Sister Jones in person, I have felt, I know her very well, and love her as much if we had met. Her letters have meant a great deal to me. Several times, when we have not written for some time, we have both sat down and written the other on the same day.

From the first she has been especially interested in the work among our Maya people done by our missionaries. I have sent to her, and she has shared with others interested there in Wales, the first accounts of the work of the Wheatons there, later of the Yateses. So,

Sister Jones writes me, it was with great joy that she received the Wheatons into her home on their way home from Wales. I know from what she says that others were truly appreciative, as all of us so long isolated are, when they got to visit with them, too.

You can imagine how pleased I was to get a picture of Sr. Jones standing beside her Welsh cupboard, filled with lovely heirloom china. And later, as the Wheatons recently stopped by to visit with us, and to bring the sacrament into our home . . . we heard a recording of Sr. Jones' voice, a sweet message to us. Also we heard the lovely voices of our church people there in song and testimonys and had a message from others in the Church there which has come to mean so much to me.

We have been so greatly blessed these past few years, that at times have been very difficult, in having our beloved missionaries bring their love and comfort into our home, especially the Yateses and the Wheatons. I am happy when I hear that others are also thus ministered to, and pray a blessing on all in such work, who follow the prompting of the Spirit, and go where It leads.

Your Sister in Christ,

Vi Hening.
1132 Aztec, N. W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico.

REPORT OF MICHIGAN REUNION

Saturday, Sept. the 8th, which was the first day of our reunion, dawned beautifully. In all our homes, here in Flint, breakfast went on as usual, except for an extra guest or two and of course the fixing of extra dishes to contribute to the noon meal.

Departure for church was quiet and dignified as usual—oh! oh! almost forgot the baked beans and pie; When we arrived at church, upstairs in the church proper, everything was quiet and peaceful, downstairs all was quiet and—well, let's put it this way: downstairs was fairly quiet and some very thoughtful ladies were setting tables, peeling potatoes, husking corn and all that restful sort of thing, which makes for a quiet, orderly, noon meal, which we had, but first there was prayer meeting.

Perhaps I cannot tell you everything that transpired there, but there were wonderful prayers and heartfelt testimonies. Our pastor, Robert Eddy had thoughtfully hooked up his recorder with microphone so that those of us downstairs working could hear and be a part of the meeting. There were only thirty some in attendance but those who were there derived much strengthening.

After dinner we heard a sermon from Brother Don Housknecht, speaking of the falling-off of fellowship, among other things.

Sunday morning we had sacrament service. This seems to be the most enjoyable time of all—with all due respects to the speakers of the reunion. But in a prayer meeting all get to take part and feel each other's thoughts, weaknesses and strengths—members sup-

plying each what the other lacks, as a body of members should. Brother Harold Pollack (who had formerly been called to be an Elder) was spoken to through Brother Clarence Wheaton in reaffirmation of that call. Brother Emory Pinder witnessed with him.

After dinner we heard from Brother Harold Pollack, who delivered a good, down to earth personal type sermon. Brother Clarence Wheaton then spoke to us in a thought-provoking sermon. It was food for all.

Our business meeting went quietly, with some discussion of a suitable place and time for the reunion next year. Attendance this year was small. For one thing, Flint is not centrally located in Michigan, though we have fine facilities for handling the meals and guests. For some it would be a long distance to come and especially hard for those with little children. The new committee for the reunion plan to give us a better and more up-to-date notices next year and we hope if it is held before children are back in school that many others will attend. Our reunion notice was in the Advocate so far in advance this year—perhaps some forgot when it was to be held.

Everyone here enjoyed the Reunion. It's too bad you missed it. We missed seeing you—and you—you especially!

May the Grace of God be with you,
Sister Juanita Oppen.

REPORT OF THE TENNESSEE REUNION

By Sister R. R. Robertson

On Saturday and Sunday, September 1st and 2nd, a Reunion was held at the local Church of Christ at Puryear, Tennessee. It was pleasant to greet our friends from distant places as they gathered in for the reunion. By Friday evening most of the saints had arrived. Bro. A. M. Smith, being the first to arrive, requested a preparation prayer meeting, which was held on Friday evening. He took charge and a wonderful spirit was with us to unite us together in friendship and love.

The sweet spirit of peace, as has been promised, was with us there on Saturday morning as we gathered for the opening of the two-day Reunion with prayer and testimony service at 9:30 A. M.

Bro. John A. Sweem delivered a wonderful message at the 11:00 o'clock hour at 2:30 P. M. another splendid sermon by our young elder Joe W. Kidd.

Saturday evening, Bro. Leon Yates spoke on the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, illustrating the talk with archeological pictures taken in Mexico. Each word and picture gave testimony of peoples of long ago speaking from the dust.

On Sunday morning at 10:00 A. M. there was Sacrament service. In these services we seem to come closer to God. The spiritual blessings we enjoyed were a real feast. All gave testimony of the sweet peace of the spirit that was enjoyed throughout the service.

At 2:30 in the afternoon Bro. Archie Bell delivered an outstanding message and Bro. Smith delivered the

concluding sermon on Sunday evening. These messages should sink deep into our hearts and give us a stronger determination to serve God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

We were blessed with having three of the Apostles and their wives with us, Apostle A. M. Smith, of Ava, Mo., Archie F. Bell of Independence, Mo., and Leon Yates of Mack's Creek, Mo. The guests that came from distant places were: Bro. and Sr. L. M. Sarratt, of Collins, Mo., their son Roland from Independence, Mo. and Sr. Ray Bryant, and their son Gerald and family, of Cowgill, Mo., Bro. and Sr. Sweem of Hamilton, Mo., Bro. Gus Schwegler and family and Bro. Camp from St. Louis, Bro. Joe W. Kidd and family, and his mother and father, Bro. and Sr. H. F. Kidd, from Oak Ridge, Tenn. There was a good many of the ministry present and Bro. Smith, taking charge, saw to it that each one, including the local members, had some part in the services.

I have mentioned enjoying so much spiritual food, but we enjoyed the physical food also. A basket lunch was brought and spread on the tables under the shade of the great oak trees on the church lawn, each day of the Reunion.

We were thankful for everyone who came and missed those whom we knew wanted to be here but could not attend.

I am sure that we were all strengthened as a result of this Reunion and the social good time we had together. The Local here gave report of being more encouraged and made stronger in the faith. Let us all continue to pray that our gatherings might be pleasing to the Lord and that His Spirit will come in as a mighty rushing wind. We look forward to another Reunion next year.

TENNESSEE REUNION

By Bro. A. M. Smith

(Lucky Editors! We have received two reports of this Reunion! We decided to use them both—you'll be glad).

The Tennessee Reunion is now history; well they say "history repeats itself" and we are hopeful this will not be an exception to the rule, for we are sure this Reunion was a blessing to all who were in attendance, and we do not make this statement from our own observation, but rather from the many words of genuine praise and thanksgiving that was uttered from those in attendance. There was a full program beginning from the evening service Aug. 31st, when we gathered in a special service to seek the Lord in prayer, asking that He bless the days that should follow, with a special blessing that all who might come hungering after righteousness, might find here in association with their brothers and sisters in the gospel, a real feast of the good things the Lord alone can give. We were not disappointed, truly God heard our prayers.

The Tennessee Saints had the details of housing and feeding of the visitors planned and in spite of the weather man, who sent the first rain after a long

drought, which caught us out under the big oak trees with a long table full of an abundance of food—even this failed to hamper or disturb the good spirit that was with us. Some one opened the big double doors in the church, willing hands moved the benches back, and strong arms carried that table and all the food into the house. No! Not even a heavy rain could dampen or spoil the good spirit that was with us.

The speakers for the occasion were as follows: Bishop Ray Bryant, from Cowgill, Mo. for Saturday morning, followed in the afternoon by Elder Joe Kidd, of Oak Ridge, Tenn. In the evening Apostle Leon Yates gave us a very instructive talk on evidences of the Book of Mormon. Among the many pictures he used was one of a ruins deep in the jungle that as yet had never been touched by the Archeologist. It was interesting to note the intense jungle growth that so nearly covered this structure. One is made to wonder how many more of these structures might be hid amid that dense tropical growth and perhaps we find ourselves secretly hoping that one more will yet be found with a key to the many ingravings already found—a key that will unlock the silence of these tombs with the positive story of this people in support of the Book of Mormon. The evidence of appreciation of Bro. Yates' talk was manifest by the lingering of the people after the meeting was over. Some were not able to attend this meeting because of the rain.

Sunday morning was the Sacrament service, with Apostles Bell and Yates in charge. There was a nice attendance and many fine testimonies given.

In the afternoon Apostle Archie Bell gave them one of his characteristic sermons showing by dates the time we are now living in and that it is very near the end, and that we have a great need if we hope to qualify as that Sanctuary that Daniel said would be cleansed. Then in the evening Bishop John Sweem spoke to a full house on the question of Baptism, leaving no excuse to any of his hearers to be in ignorance of the need or the requirement of this vital ordinance in the church.

Thus ended the Tennessee Reunion, and we were reminded of the song we once loved to sing, "When you come to the end of a perfect day, and you sit alone with your thoughts." But some were not yet ready to say "good bye", for Monday being Labor Day and many were not going home, so once again they asked Bro. Yates to give them another talk on the ruins of Yucatan.

This was rather an informal talk, illustrated from the many slides he has of that mystery country on the other side of the border—so the Reunion ran over its scheduled time. It is now past history, but we surely trust that it may be repeated not only in Puryear, where the Paschals and Bro. Overcast live, but in many other places as well; for the spiritual uplift was well worth the effort each put forth, and in this reunion every man holding the Priesthood found there was a work for him to do, and each and everyone responded to their call.

A GOD OF MIRACLES

By Leon Yates

(Sermon delivered in Collins, Missouri, September 25, 1962).

To preface these few thoughts I read first from the Book of Mormon, page 711, chapter 4:75-82.

"And now, O all ye that have imagined up unto yourselves a god who can do no miracles, I would ask of you, Have all these things past, of which I have spoken. Has the end come yet?

Behold I say unto you, Nay; and God has not ceased to be a God of miracles.

Behold, are not the things that God hath wrought marvelous in our eyes? Yea, and who can comprehend the marvelous works of God?

Who shall say that it was not a miracle, that by his work the heaven and the earth should be; and by the power of his word, man was created of the dust of the earth; and by the power of his word, hath miracles been wrought?

And who shall say that Jesus Christ did not do many mighty miracles?

And there were many mighty miracles wrought by the hands of the apostles.

And if there were miracles wrought, then why has God ceased to be a God of miracles, and yet be an unchangeable being.

And behold I say unto you, He changeth not; if so, he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles."

I believe with all my heart that this Scripture is true. It is true today, it was true in ages past, it shall be true through the countless ages of eternity. The God of miracles, who has the power to reveal himself to the children of men was Lord and Master over all the universe on the day when a young boy went into the woods to pray.

Most, if not all of us, are familiar with the story of Joseph Smith. We recall the occasion of his attending the religious revivals of the day and of the confusion that came to him because of the many doctrines being taught. From the words penned by Joseph himself we read the following:

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties, caused by these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter, fifth verse, which reads, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him." Never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the heart of man than did this at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. At length I came to the determination to 'ask of God', concluding that if he gave wisdom to them who lacked wisdom, and would give liberally and not upbraid, I might venture. So in accordance with this my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt."

Here was a young boy about to experience a miracle. First he had a desire to know the truth, second he had faith in God. Third he was allowing the Spirit to have sway in his heart as is witnessed by his statement, "never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the heart of man than did this at this time to mine." There was a spirit in young Joseph and the inspiration of the Almighty was giving him understanding.

So he went into the woods to pray and he relates that soon after he began to pray: "I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in my being, just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me my name, and said, (pointing to the other), "This is my beloved son, hear him."

There are several things revealed in this reading which I think are often overlooked. To me it points out that when one is striving for truth and light that there is always present an evil power. It reveals to me that when we are in the power of that evil one that we are in thick darkness. It reveals to me that before we can have or experience the miracle of revelation from God to ourselves we must put forth our strength and effort towards that end. Of course we will not all be blessed with the presence of God the Father and His Son, but every man can be blessed with that miracle of revelation as did Peter when Christ asked him the question, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter's heart and soul having been touched by that miracle of revelation from God to man gave answer, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Christ verified that a miracle had been performed in the heart of Peter when he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

At the time of this experience, Joseph was told not to join any of the churches, because, "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

A few days later Joseph told a local minister of his experience. The minister said it was from the Devil, that all visions were done away. Now here, is a strange thing. A man professing himself to be a minister of the gospel, denying God the power to perform a miracle, yet in the same breath confessing that the Devil had the power to perform such a miracle. Yes indeed having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

Joseph testified to the world that from time to time, angels or heavenly messengers appeared to him. He relates that on September 21, 1823 a personage appeared to him and said that his name was Moroni. Those who have studied the Book of Mormon will recognize him as the last man who wrote in the book. This messenger told him of an ancient record and of the fullness of the gospel that was written therein. Told him also of an ancient instrument called, Urim and Thummin which was with the record and that the instrument was to be used to interpret the ancient record.

When we reach this point in telling this story, many people turn away and want to hear no more. We have mentioned a vision, the visitation of angels, and an instrument by which an ancient record was to be interpreted. All of these things are miracles and, they say, God just doesn't do those things in this day and age. Many who take this attitude feel that they are true Christians and believe in God. They are like the minister who told Joseph, all these things are done away, they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

God is the same, yesterday, today and forever and He works through miracles today as in the days of old. I believe that the same power that spoke from heaven in the form of a dove at the time of the baptism of Christ, and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," has spoken again in these last days. This was a miracle, so also was it a miracle when two personages appeared unto young Joseph and one said of the other, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."

Let us go back into the Old Testament and learn how an unchangeable God deals with people. Num. 12:5-9, "And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them."

Note this, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision," "speak unto him in a dream." "With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark

speeches." All this did the Lord do unto Moses. Shall we deny the same God the power to so do in our day and age? a God who has declared himself unchangeable!

As to the visitation of angels, all students of the Bible well know that God used this means of communication to reveal his will from time to time to the children of men. Why should we now say that an unchangeable God has changed and no longer uses this method of miraculous power to communicate with his children here upon earth.

Let me here cite you to a Scripture in the ancient record that was translated by the miraculous use of the Urim and Thummin. Book of Moroni 7:27-34.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, hath miracles ceased, because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath set down on the right hand of God, to claim of the Father his rights of mercy which he hath upon the children of men; For he hath answered the ends of the law, and he claimeth all those who have faith in him; and they who have faith in him, will cleave unto every good thing; wherefore he advocateth the cause of the children of men; and he dwelleth eternally in the heavens? And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, hath miracles ceased? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, shewing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind, in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is, to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him; And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; And after this manner bringeth to pass the Father the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men."

Now in regards to dreams, let us turn to Job 33rd chapter and begin with the last half of the 12th verse. "I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."

Some will say, yes I can go along with you thus far, I do believe in visions, dreams and I might even go along with the belief of the visitation of angels from time to time, but this business about the Urim and Thummin, that is a little too much for me. I would say to those skeptics, if this is too much, then the Bible is

too much. The Bible definitely speaks of this instrument and the work for which it was used.

We find in Cruden's Concordance of the Bible, "the high Priest, having then fixed his eyes upon the stones of the breast plate, which was before him, he there read the answer of the Lord." Also we find the following. "If it be inquired how long the custom of consulting God by Urim and Thummin subsisted in Israel; the Rabbis think, that it continued no longer than under the tabernacle. It is a maxim among them, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel by Urim and Thummim while the tabernacle remained, and under the first Temple."

Two whole columns in the Concordance to the Bible are given over to the word, Thummin. In the book of Ezra we find where there were certain people who had lost their identity and it says in chapter 2 beginning at verse 62, "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore were they as polluted, put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummin."

I believe that the unchangeable God has in these last days caused another priest to stand with Urim and Thummim and through its miraculous use an ancient record has been translated that we might again taste of most holy things.

Do you believe in miracles? If not and yet you profess to be a Christian, you do not know the meaning of Christian.

John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 'If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' And what was and is, his word? "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Revelation from God to man is always a miracle. "And upon this rock I will build my church."

When Joseph Smith and six Elders founded the Church of Christ in 1830 it was the only church in the world that claimed to be organized by the direct spirit of revelation. The only way possible to continue in his word. The Church of Christ could not have possibly come into being in any other way, except by a miraculous birth. The Church of Christ was born through the miracle of revelation by the spirit of an unchangeable God.

The church today does enjoy the gifts that were promised, but only to the extent that the people believe and continue in his word. Anyone denying the fact that it is possible to have the spiritual gifts today as in days of old, has not read the Scriptures, or does not understand them. I read from the Book of Mormon, page 710, chapter 4:66-69.

"And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healings, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpre-

tation of tongues. Behold I say unto you, He that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them. For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today and forever; and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing. And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a God who doth vary, and in him there is a shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a God who is not a God of miracles."

Now we read the words of Moroni that were written just before he hid up the record, to be hid from the eyes of the world for so many years, page 775, chapter 10:8-14. "And again I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them. For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom: and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; and to another exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit. And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles; and again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; and again, to another the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; and again, to another, all kinds of tongues. And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will. And I would exhort you my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ. And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same, yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are Spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men."

Yes, I believe in a God of miracles, in an unchangeable God. Men are living in the very midst of miracles. The sunlight has the power of life and death. Seeds from the same earth have the power to produce after their own kind. The flower and the thorn bush grow side by side, drawing strength from the same earth to build after their own kind. Miracles? Yes! And God is the author of miracles.

Because of the miracle of healing having touched my life when with a broken back I was totally paralyzed, I am now able with flexible fingers to strike the keys of a typewriter and pour out my soul in testimony and in defense of the mighty miraculous power of the living and unchangeable God.

When Christ instructed his Twelve to, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give", he was not telling them or the world that here was a group of men who could within their own power perform anything. The Scripture makes it clear that all must be done in and through the name of Christ who has all power in

heaven and earth. Miracles are not wrought by men, but only through the mighty power of God.

There were two of the Apostles, Peter and John, who went to the temple to pray. There at the temple door they found a man lame from his mother's womb, he was begging alms. Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I unto thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping stood up and walked."

After this was done all the people who saw it looked at Peter and John and wondered. Now listen to the words of Peter, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk." And in Acts 4:8-10, Peter gives them answer. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and Elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

The Spirit of Christ performed this miracle of healing, not Peter. Peter was only the instrument through which Christ worked. It was also the Spirit of Christ that restored the gospel of salvation to earth. Joseph Smith did not do it, but he was the human instrument through which God worked that the nations of the earth might once again have the healing power of the Gospel of Christ among them.

When men come into contact with Christ's Church restored on earth, they will not be able to comprehend its greatness as long as they doubt God's miraculous power, and his unchangeableness. Any man can start a church. Many men have, until today we have many churches. But no man could organize Christ's Church on earth unless he was chosen of God, and then, only through the miraculous power of revelation.

I would like to cite your attention to a modern revelation, Book of Commandments, page 4, paragraphs 4 and 5, "Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph, and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world, and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets: the weak things of the world should come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones; that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh, but that every man might speak in the name of God, the Lord, even the Savior of the world; that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that thefulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple, unto the ends of the world; and before kings and rulers."

"Behold I am God and have spoken it: these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding; and inasmuch as they erred, it might be made known; and inasmuch as they sought wisdom, they might be instructed; and inasmuch as they sinned, they might be chastened, that they might repent; and inasmuch as they were humble, they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time: after they having received the record of Nephites; yea, even my servant Joseph might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the book of Mormon: And also, those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity, and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually, for I the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance: Nevertheless he that repenteth and doeth the commandments of the Lord, shall be forgiven, and he that repenteth not from him shall be taken even the light which he hath received, for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of hosts."

We have read modern revelation. It was given, as was all Scripture, not only to those addressed but also to all who will give heed. It was given that we might have understanding, that if we erred it might be made known; and if we sought wisdom, we might have instructions. If we sinned, we might be chastened that we might repent, and if we be humble, we might be made strong and receive instructions from on high from time to time.

I am made happy in the truth, that Christ, said, (speaking of revelation) "upon this rock I will build my church". I am made happy in the truth that the Church of Christ was founded by direct revelation from God to man.

I am made happy in the truth that certain wonderful blessings and signs are following those who believe. I am made happy in the truth that I have experienced and witnessed some of these wonderful blessings.

My testimony to you today is, God is and has been and always shall be an unchangeable God. He stands ready at all times to reveal unto man the way of eternal salvation. But just as sure as the sun shines above, He will reject those who refuse to believe, and choose darkness rather than light.

These things are not fairy tales, but if you do not believe in miracles you may as well read Aesop's Fables.

If you are in doubt, yet hunger and thirst after righteousness, go into your closet and after you have shut the door, think well on these words, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

" A MORE EXCELLENT WAY"

I Cor. 12:31.

"Thankfulness"

A woman, when she first saw the ocean, said, "Thank God for one thing of which there is enough."

Possibly too many of us, today, are thankful only for those things which come to us in great quantities. When we have an abundance we are thankful, but are we thankful for the meager bits which come to us in this life?

The seemingly small things which we have a tendency to overlook when we count our blessings are the things for which we indeed should be grateful. For there is no doubt that our lives are kept in proper balance by, a cheerful word, a smile, and consideration for our fellowmen.

Even though we are not large in numbers, nor rich in worldly possessions we are rich in spiritual treasures. Brotherly love and the Gospel of Christ restored to earth in our day are treasures to be cherished, for without them life would be thrown out of balance.

Let us think of the people whose lands and homes have been devastated by war. The people of Quemoy Islands, in the straits of Formosa, who continue to resist political slavery, have very little food, clothing or money. Their homes have been bombarded almost daily by thousands of shells from the mainland, and their ragged children play, unconcerned, in the shell pocked streets. It is the only playground some of them have ever known, and the greatest tragedy of all, the majority of them know nothing of God.

Although there are many under privileged in our own country, each beat of our hearts should echo praise to God for we are not, so far, torn apart by bombs and every person has the freedom to worship God in his own way. While we rejoice with thankful hearts for those blessings, let our hearts also bleed for those who suffer.

For what should a man be thankful?

For the many simple blessings that we receive each day which help sustain our lives and contribute to our happiness. For the brightness of each new day, bringing new opportunities for service. For the quiet rest of the peaceful night, and the beauty of a full moon, with clouds floating gently by, casting its soft light on a free land, where we can enjoy rest without fear.

Many hundreds of years ago, as that same beautiful moon was casting its light over this land, the Lord spoke to a young man, saying, "Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou has sought me diligently, with lowliness of heart. And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and ye shall be led to a land of promise; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands." I Nephi 1:53-54.

That land of promise was America. Since that time, 600 years before the birth of Christ, this land has seen many seasons of darkness, when men turned to wickedness and forgot God. But it has also seen many

fruitful seasons when the great light of God flooded the hearts of men. And for these seasons of light we can be thankful.

Since that early date in the history of the Western World, God's promise has been true. It is a choice land, a land of promise to the persecuted peoples of the world, and of those who seek religious freedom—freedom to meet together and worship God according to the dictates of their own mind.

The story of the "first thanksgiving" in our land is a heart warming story of a group of people with truly thankful hearts, because they had a deep faith in God. On September 6th, 1620 a group of 102 persecuted people sailed from Southhampton, England for the promised land. After 67 days crossing the stormy Atlantic Ocean they landed on the rocky shores of New England. The first thing those people did after landing was to kneel on the shore, under an open sky and thank God for the guidance and protection He had given them.

It was a new thing to them, a privilege they could not enjoy in their old country. They came to America so they could have freedom to worship God according to their own free will.

The first winter was long and severe, during which almost half of them died. Yet in a simple way they sought the presence of God, by reading His word, trying to understand His ways, and to live by His precepts. With the coming of summer a renewed hope was born within them, their crops were good, and they knew that with God's help they could withstand the next winter. They were thankful for all God had done for them, for religious freedom, and a new way of life in a choice land. They felt the world was God's house, and that His presence was always with them. They worshipped Him not only on Sunday, but every day wherever they were.

God has never promised that we would have no hardship or sorrow in this life. But He does promise happiness and contentment to those that obey His commandments. Even though people may suffer hardships and persecutions, if they seek Him they will find peace and joy in their hearts.

The Pilgrims certainly proved that, they were witnesses to the truth and goodness of God's mercy. They were thankful for the meager sustenance and strength to rise above disaster.

In the fall Gov. Bradford said, "We have survived cold and hardships, let us give thanks." That first thanksgiving was not only a feast—for three days they offered prayers and sang songs of praise for the abundance of God's mercy.

That is the brief story of a people who came to the promised land seeking spiritual contact with God. It is a witness to the truth of God's promise to Nephi and to those before him—"Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently with lowliness of heart. And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and ye shall be led to a land of promise: yea, a land which is choice above all other lands."

When William Bradford and George Carver signed the "Solemn Declaration" which established the common wealth of Massachusetts, it was their hope that this new land would be dedicated to God, and that His purposes would stand out as a beacon of equal opportunity to all men, and reflect God's righteousness in National policy.

It is through the efforts of those who have gone before that makes our country different. It is through their sacrifices that we have the privilege of attending the church of our choice and worshipping according to the dictates of our own minds.

We have been given the opportunity to worship in a free land, and God expects us as individuals and as a nation, to be worthy of our heritage. Only as long as we abide by the precepts of God, will we be secure, for all His promises are given on condition of obedience, and His promise of a free land is given on the same condition. The conditions by which we, or any other nation should possess this land, were given to the Brother of Jared, 2,200 years before the birth of Christ. "And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land. That is a land of promise, and what soever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of His wrath shall come upon them. And the fullness of His wrath shall come upon them when they are ripened in iniquity: wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off: **For it is the everlasting decree of God.**" El. 31-32.

Too often we take for granted, our freedom and our Christian heritage. Unless, we as a nation, begin to serve God in all our ways, the prophesy given to the Brother of Jared could become true, and the hopes of the founding fathers will be an empty dream.

Certainly we cannot assume that God will continue to bless our ways—unless our ways become His ways.

In scope, this is a national problem, and the responsibility is on the shoulders of every Christian in every church. And that makes it a personal problem of every individual who has taken the name of Christ upon him. For a nation, or a church, or a home, can be no better than the individuals who make it up.

It is time for you and me to do some soul searching,—ask yourself, what am I doing for Christ? The answer might shock you. Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Do you always stand up for the Christian principles of human relationship?—regardless of race or creed? Have you been active in affairs of government where Christian principles were involved? Do you do or say what Christ would expect a Christian to do or say?

Do you withhold your support from the Church when things are not done to suit your individual liking?

Have you helped those in need with charitable donations of time or money?

Have you really been grateful for the good things that have come to you, or has it been a casual acceptance?

Have you been a true worker in God's vineyard? Have you prayed sincerely? Have you worked faithfully?

There are a great many more pertinent questions which you could ask yourself—and each one might prick a little deeper into your conscience. If your answer to any of these questions is no—you have need to evaluate your life.

There is never a time when some duty will not present us the opportunity for service. Our time is running out, each day, each hour, each minute leaves us with that much less time to do some worthwhile thing for Christ.

Now to ask one more question, **"What has Christ done for you?"**

Meditate on that question—it will take some time to make a complete answer. Christ has done so many things, large and small, for each of us that our hearts should be filled with a wonderful sense of thanksgiving. As we meditate about these things we should become mindful of the Christian heritage that has been handed down to us—our freedom, our Church—our homes—and all through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

—E. J. M.

LOCAL NEWS

Best Rewards From Serving the Lord

Greetings once again from the Black River Falls, Sparta local. We have been busy during the summer months with various activities. Brother Glenn Gill painted our little church, and one Wednesday's meeting was spent as a clean-up time in preparation for the reunion.

June 6, 7, 8, and 9, was spent as a short week Bible School for our younger church attendants. Sisters Margaret Gill and Gladys Marquette, and Brother Glenn Gill were the teachers. The lesson theme was the Restoration movement with each student making a note book. The children themselves offered the prayers and chose the songs to be sung, with the exception of three new ones, for the opening exercises. Sister Margaret Gill told the Bible story each day. This was the first time a Bible School had been set up in this local, but our enrollment numbered about 20. It was a very rewarding experience both for the students and teachers, and our desire is that we may continue this school in the future.

Our Bible school program of questions and answers was held on June 10 in place of Sunday school followed by a round table discussion by all on the Restoration Story.

We held a business meeting on June 20 for the purpose of voting on the referendum. On June 24 we held meetings at the church with a basket dinner. The morning was spent in a round table discussion on baptism, the hereafter and God's judgment. In the afternoon Brother Glenn Gill spoke. Otherwise we have had our regular preaching, sacrament services, and Wednesday evening Bible study class.

The following are resumes of the sermons we have heard.

Everyone in this world, regardless of religious belief, has one common ground: that of a belief in God or a Supreme Being. This, then, is an approach to those outside the faith. Christ came to the world, which would indicate it wasn't God's choice to keep the gospel confined to a select group. Therefore it is our duty as followers of Christ to spread the Gospel to all.

We have God's words and the powerful tool of prayer to find answers to questions. Asking as we do takes time. Therefore, people get impatient and this causes trouble. We must have the starter, faith, and work towards building our patience which sustains this faith. Then with a desire to know, a willingness to accept and allow God to steer us in spite of the way we feel, and a continued attitude in mind of prayer and humility, God won't refuse us and we will be among his believers. But with a lack of faith, patience, and a predetermined mind, we try to force God to establish our ideas and we prove our disbelief in Him.

We, today, can take lesson in the Nephite story in the Book of Mormon. Hardened hearts cause people to fall. Just a little folly can cause people to change from a person of honor, to an obnoxious, worthless person. There is no safety in rank or position. The only safety is in our example: what we say and do. People are taking upon themselves to do God's work.

"The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself." (Eccl. 10:12).

Are we the children of God? Are we strengthened with His strength? Are we worthy of His name? Are we built upon His rock? Are we the ones with whom God works? When we are baptized, we give our body and soul in service to God. If we serve in sincerity and truth, we do only as God wants. If we hunt for excuses or do as we want or as others do, our baptism wasn't entered into with a full sincerity of heart.

One sermon was taken from song number 214 in the hymnal. In singing this song we say we won't be idlers, or people who don't do anything, and that we want to share our life's blessings with others. "There is work within the vineyard, there is service to be done," refers to all. No matter the small duty done by lay members or the preaching done by missionaries we all have our duty if only to set an example. We are asking God to send us forth in his vineyard with the light, hope, joy, and Christ of the gospel. Are we willing with a sincere determination to be fed and nurtured spiritually, to allow God to lead us in giving a testimony of Christ to others? Are we sincere in what we sing?

Scripture tells of the angel flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel, which statement is associated with the restoration and church organization. Some refuse to accept this prophecy teaching that science is the prevailing authority and will conquer all. To refuse to believe in prophecy, or

to say that it can't happen today, is to deny God, his method of working, and to say he changes.

Prophecy brings us to the closing period of time: the time to decide on which side of the fence we are going to be when the Master comes and we're brought before the bar of judgment. We won't be able to find excuses. This is our time to prepare for what comes after.

Besides the above sermons by Brother Glenn Gill and Brother Isaac Brockman, we were privileged to hear a sermon by Brother B. C. Flint on August 5. He likened the stone which broke nations in the vision of Daniel to the religious "stone" of the restoration which has broken religious sects in fragments. This is a greater time of confusion and bad influence. We need to become better acquainted with God, the restoration, the gospel and ourselves to meet the influence of the world. Only God holds the means of unification.

After the reunion Brother and Sister Flint and Brother and Sister Leon Yates remained with us for a time. Brother Yates gave us a series of talks on the following ideas.

God is a God of miracles. The story of Joseph Smith and the restoration are full of miracles. Revelation is a miracle, and it was on this rock (revelation) that God said He would build His Church. Because God said this, the only way the Church of Christ could be in existence is through revelation.

God is an unchangeable God. But because so many people do not comprehend his power or plan of salvation, they try to cut him down to their own dimensions, making him changeable. But through study they could find He can't be cut down. As in the organization of His church on earth, all three records—Bible, Book of Mormon, Book of Commandments—show the same beginning and organization of His Church.

We were happy to have Brother and Sister John Davies of Madison and Brother Rolland Sarratt of Independence as visitors in our post reunion services, and all those who attended the reunion.

Sr. Margret Gill, Reporter.

IF WE KNEW EACH OTHER BETTER

If we knew each other better,
 You and I and all the rest,
 Seeing down beneath the surface
 To the sorrows all unguessed,
 We would quit our cold complaining
 And a hand of trust extend;
 If we knew each other better,
 We would count each one our friend.

—Author Unknown.

"... avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain." Titus 3:9.

FIRST NATIONAL THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humble to implore His protection and favor; and whereas both houses of Congress have, by their joint Committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceable to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Now, therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the Beneficent Author of all good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in tendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country, previous to their becoming a nation; for the single and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of His providence, in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty, which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish Constitutions of Government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors, which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And, also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the Great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all people, by constantly being a government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us) and to bless them with good governments, peace and record; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increasing of science, among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best. Given under my hand at the City of New York, the third day of October, 1789.

—George Washington.

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." Ps. 69:30.

"Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Ps. 95:2.

EXCUSES FOR NOT ATTENDING CHURCH

"The weather was so hot."

Yes, but isn't it possible that there is yet a hotter place than the "weather" for all people and all nations that forget God?

"It was too cold."

Was not the coldness in your spiritual life just a degree or two cold also?

"The day was too wet and rainy."

You don't need a boat, and you wouldn't melt; and does the rain stop you when you really want to go somewhere else?

"We had company come in."

Does the coming in of company prevent you from having your dinner? Why should it prevent you from partaking of spiritual sustenance for the soul? Why not say to the company: We go to church. Come and go with us.

"I had an appointment with Mr. . . . on business."

Is your appointment with your Lord of less importance. Who fixed the conflicting appointment? Why do you forget that God wants you to keep an appointment with him?

"I don't like Mr. or Mrs. so-and-so, and he, or she, attends that church."

Do you absent yourself from the lodge, banquet, dance or theater, because some attend there whom you do not like?

"I've heard the gospel preached, I believed it and accepted it, so why should I attend?"

You had dinner yesterday, but that should not prevent you from going to dinner today.

"I intended to go to church, but just didn't get around to it."

Some one has said that hell is paved with good intentions, never executed.

"I didn't feel well—seemed to have sort of a headache."

It will be something more severe than a headache when those who have neglected their services to their Lord, will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him who comes in power and great glory.

In the light of His countenance in that great day some of our pretended "reasons" for not serving the Lord and attending church, will be shown to be the cheap excuses that they really are—and the Word of the Lord says that at that time there will be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Be in attendance at the house of worship. And when you fail, don't lay up more yet against yourself by making foolish and hypocritical excuses. It is just as bad in the sight of God to be a hypocrite in these days as when Christ described the one who had "married a wife" and couldn't come on that account; and another had "bought a yoke of oxen" and had to go out and try them.

Your Master requires of you, that you attend public worship **REGULARLY!** Are you doing it? If not, it is your loss here, and in eternity. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth—that shall he also reap."

James E. Yates.

I GO TO CHURCH BECAUSE:

I hold the church to be of divine origin, God reserving the right to rule. "I will build my church," says he. To him belongs the right to choose his representatives, by His own voice as when He said: "I have chosen you," or through His ministry when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul."

In all creation I see the evidence that God is. In the church only do I find the unfoldment of His purpose and His will.

The lodge, theatre, or community organizations may appeal to the social, emotional, or intellectual nature of man, but fail to nourish the spiritual. Having given their best, man knows no more of God than before; but the church feeds the soul, revealing the things of God and that which is to be.

Rome was not the work of a day, a college graduate of one recitation, a saint of one church service. The irregular pupil is the one who knows school is a failure. To him it is. The intermittent church-goer is in the same class. He knows the church is a failure—to him it is. He misses all but the husk. By continued attendance I receive "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," until I partake of "life more abundant," and this is a life eternal to know. "He that doeth the will of the Father shall know."

In the church I find my fullest enjoyment, broadest understanding, deepest convictions, the sweetest music of my life; that which comforts, soothes, heals, and answers the silent query of the heart.

—Apostle Leon A. Gould.

". . . let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." Ps. 107:22.

". . . . thanksgiving and honour, . . . be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen." Rev. 7:12.

". . . let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Col. 3:15.

"Be noble enough to make amends when you have injured another. It may hurt your pride, but it will develop your character."

"Becoming disgruntled when things seem to go "go wrong" only retards our thinking power, leaving us unable to see the right way. Obstacles can turn into blessings if we treat them as we should!"

—Just Between You and Me.

BAPTISM

In the third chapter of St. John we read a very plain, positive statement by Jesus. Surely no words can be spoken with more authority: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It would seem useless for any man to doubt or challenge these words of the Divine Law Giver. "Born of water" surely refers to water baptism, or we can find no meaning in words. Buried with him in baptism can only mean immersion. We cannot find a complete line of language in one chapter or in one book, in the New Testament to explain our full duty to God, and requirements of the gospel of Christ. Such commandments are distributed all through the book. Jesus gave a reply when effort was made to tempt him: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jesus said: "My word shall judge you all at the last day.

Baptism includes part of "the new birth." "Ye must be born again." It does not require so much time just to be born, as it does to make the required growth afterward. In this physical life hundreds and thousands of newly born babies die in infancy and early childhood, so also in the spiritual realm. In either case it is a distressing experience. This idea of "being saved" is better determined at the "end of the way".

We may be on board the good ship of salvation, but it requires a safe landing to make the journey complete. The promise is: He that shall endure to the end the same shall be saved.

Richard M. Maloney.

RECIPROCATE

We are helped by helping others;
 Joy we give and joy we get!
 Seeing others as our brothers
 Is life's safest, surest "bet"!
 If we give what folks are needing
 It will pay us in the end,
 And we just can't help succeeding
 In the Game of Life, my friend!

Life gives back just what we give it:
 Give it smiles—and smiles we get!
 If we learn this rule, and live it,
 We will seldom know regret!
 Give a cheerful word—we'll reap it;
 It will come back multiplied
 And will linger—we can keep it
 In our "treasure-chest," inside!

Get together! Pull together!
 Is the spirit that will win!
 If the gales of life we'd weather,
 We must "buck" them, with a grin!
 Help yourself, by helping others;
 Grab an oar and join the crew!
 Pull together with your brothers
 And they'll win the race—for you!

—Author Unknown.

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