

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.

Vol. 47

Independence, Missouri, March 1970

No. 3

My Task

— ☆ —

"Master, where shall I work today?"
And my love flowed warm and free,
And He pointed out a tiny plot,
And said, "Tend that for me."
But I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not there.
Not anyone can see,
No matter how well my task is done—
Not that little place for me."
And His voice, when I spoke, it was not stern,
But He answered me tenderly,
"Little one, search that heart of thine,
Are you working for them or Me?
Nazareth was just a little place,
And so was Galilee."

Author Unknown

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Zion's Advocate

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EDITORIAL . . .

MY TESTIMONY

This editorial will be a little different from previous one in that I wish to bear my testimony to the truthfulness of the word of God as found in the Bible and the Book of Mormon and to testify of my conviction that this Church of Christ with headquarters on the Temple Lot is the true Church of Christ and the only true Church upon the face of the earth today.

Nearly fourteen years ago I made the most important decision of my life. I, in obedience to my Master's call, took upon me His name and entered into a covenant to serve Him throughout all the days of my life. I was but a babe then; but a child now. My knowledge of spiritual things was then very meager. How did I know this was His church? I didn't know, yet deep within my heart I knew it was. I had no doubt and I entered the fold with exceeding great joy. It was a truly glorious event. I looked forward with desire to the tasks that lay ahead. First I wanted, almost desperately, to know what the Lord had to say in his word. I began to study, but it seemed that time was forever short and my desire never fully satisfied. Gradually, ever so gradually, I began to understand for myself what I had heard others speak about. Yet I felt so insufficient. I wanted to be able to give a reason for the hope that was within me.

Less than a year later the other members of my family joined, among them, my father who was at the time also ordained to the eldership. It was in one of his sermons after that which gave me the first of a series of striking proofs of the authenticity of this church. What a marvelous thing it was. What I had accepted on faith before, now was backed by scriptural and historical evidence. The evidence was conclusive. No other church could qualify. I was strongly impressed.

With each passing year my hope and the reasons for my hope became more and more grounded in truth. I have found the Bible and the Book of Mormon to be beautiful precious jewels of hope and truth. How few people it seems realize what a priceless possession they have in God's word. The Book of Mormon in particular is a glorious book of exceeding great beauty. I have found it to be a gift of God's pure love. It is hard to understand anyone rejecting it once he has read it through.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon contain the words of eternal life and a lifetime of devoted study would be insufficient for us to comprehend all that is contained therein. Oh, then, how important it is we read and study them at every opportunity.

Is it going far afield to affirm that this Church of Christ is the only true church upon the earth today? I do not think so. But aren't there thousands of people throughout the world who are pure in heart and who have never heard of the restored gospel? Undoubtedly there are and they are not rejected of God. They are in the Lord's hand for good. Jesus said, "if they are not against us, they are on our part." Perhaps the

time will come when many of them will be led to the Church of Christ—if not in this life, the next.

It should also be obvious that there can only be one true quorum of twelve apostles. Christ is not divided and there is only one road that leads to heaven. When once a person comes in contact with the Church of Christ, and comprehends to any degree at all of its import and message, and then rejects it, he cannot be saved in the kingdom of God. For he has just shown himself to be a goat. For had he been a sheep he would have followed and entered in by the way, for the sheep hear my voice saith the good shepherd.

The bride will be victorious in the end and made ready for the bridegroom. Those within the body of Christ who will not prepare themselves to meet him when He comes shall find themselves cast out and rejected of Him. The presence of tares amongst the wheat should not be sufficient cause to doubt Christ and His word nor to reject His Church. This is Christ's church irregardless of the weaknesses of some. But who among us in this little body of Christ can say we are so strong as to not have some weakness? One brother may have a weakness that is particularly noticeable to those about him. But what about those weaknesses which are not so noticeable within our own lives? Our hidden sins? Are we any the less innocent? Or he any the more guilty?

I am not concerned over the weaknesses of men in the Church in that regard, only that they have weaknesses. It does not detract from the fact that this is Lord's Church. Therefore we should not condemn His church just because of the humanity in it. Rather it is the fault of the individual and not the fault of the Church or body of Christ.

The Church of latter days was to be weak and feeble for the Book of Mormon prophesied that it would be so because of the wickedness of the Great and Abominable Church. So we should not be surprised at its present condition. But should that destroy our faith? Not if we believe in the promises of the Lord. For this is the Church of Christ and nothing man can do can change that fact.

There is a glorious future coming for those of us who will set our hand to the plow and not look back. For the harvest is great and the laborers few.

Though I have been in the Church these few years and have seen the Church barely progress yet my faith remains unshaken for I know that the time will soon come when the bride of Christ will discard her tattered clothing and be gloriously attired in robes of righteousness.

Harvey E. Seibel

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." I John 3:8

"HEAR YE, HEAR YE"

The following is a calendar of events for the month of April 1970:

April 2, 10:00 A. M. Solemn Assembly
 April 3, 10:00 A. M. Solemn Assembly
 April 4, 10:00 A. M. Solemn Assembly
 April 5, 9:00 A. M. Sacrament Service
 April 6, 10:00 A. M. Official Opening of the annual Ministers' Conference

Please submit all reports and documents to the General Church Secretary at the earliest possible date to help expedite the business of the church.

James A. Hedrick
 General Church Secretary

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Justin Lincoln Verhei of Spokane, Washington transferred his membership from the R. L. D. S. Church to the Church of Christ February 1, 1970. Apostle Archie F. Bell missionary-in-charge of the state of Washington officiated the transfer and recommended Brother Verhei's membership.

BLESSINGS

Jennifer Raye Kidd, the daughter of Samuel Roy and Helen Maxine Kidd of Raytown, Missouri, was blessed under the hands of Apostles William A. Sheldon and William F. Anderson of East Independence, Missouri Local Church of Christ February 1, 1970.

NOTICE Solemn Assembly

The following resolution was carried by the 1969 General Conference of the Church at the 2:00 P. M. session, April. "That this Church of Christ appoint a solemn assembly of all the membership and all the children to be held at the Temple Lot on the three days immediately preceding the 1970 Conference for the purpose of seeking God's divine assistance and direction in accomplishing those things which have already been commanded that the Church should accomplish, in order that it might move forward in the work of the Gospel of Christ. That this Solemn Assembly will occur on the dates of April 2nd through April 4th."

The Council of Apostles hereby announces that a Solemn Assembly of the Church in harmony with the above resolution, will be held April 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, in the upper auditorium of the building on the Temple Lot, beginning at 10:00 A. M., April 2nd.

9:00 A. M., April 5th a Sacrament meeting will be held in the same room with the Council of Apostles in Charge.

Respectfully submitted,
 Archie F. Bell, Secretary
 Council of Apostles

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Original Articles are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the teachings of the church or the opinions of the editorial staff. Even though some articles may in some cases be interpreted as controversial in nature, we believe that such articles if written in an affirmative manner in which a belief or an opinion is expressed, and evidences presented to support that belief, said articles should be presented to the readers.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED

By Joseph F. Smith

In this world of instant this and instant that and with all our push-button gadgets around us, it is no wonder people desire a "get-religion-quick" theory, or perhaps we should call it instant salvation. God's plans are not this way. Even as a great oak tree takes years of slow growth and development, so it is with man's spiritual growth. Isaiah 28:9 and 10 explains it this way, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." In 2 Peter 3:18 Peter says "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Notice that he says, "grow" not that we are filled instantly with the knowledge of God but we gain a little each day. Yes, daily we should strive to add to that which we have.

In approaching this question of what one must do to be saved, we find many who teach that solely by belief in Christ we become sons of God. A belief in Christ is absolutely necessary to become one of God's children, for there is no other name given whereby man can obtain salvation. One must remember, however, that belief in Christ means more than just asserting to the fact that Christ is the son of God; believing that fact alone will not bring salvation. Christ gave us to know that the devils believe, but it will not bring them salvation (James 2:19). Christ came into this world and instituted a plan whereby, through obedience to this plan, man could become children of God and joint heirs with Christ to the Kingdom of God.

True belief in Christ means not only asserting to, but also applying the plan which Christ instituted. When we elect a new president, we decide for or against the man by his own personal characteristics, and his platform. Thus we say that to believe in a man means also to believe in his plan or policy. So we see that faith alone will not bring salvation; there is more required. Let us search the scriptures and see if we can find the answer to our question.

In Acts 16:30 and 31, we find our question asked and answered. "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Again in Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Some will say "there is your answer, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Why search any more? You have the answer." But let us suppose for a moment that we desire to make a batch of biscuits. First let us mix some flour and water.

... There you have some biscuits. I agree with you, they wouldn't taste very good without adding all the other ingredients that are required. In order to make a successful batch of biscuits one must use the whole recipe. If such an obvious truth of this physical world can be so easily understood and accepted, why can't we apply the same rule on our spiritual world? It is just as true that we cannot obtain salvation without using all of Christ's recipe.

To continue, let us turn to Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." And again in Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." In both of these verses we find one particular thought emphasized, that we should repent. So we have a second answer to our question of what must I do to be saved. Not only do we have to have faith but now we see that repentance is required. Which of these two should we accept?

We must accept both of these answers or none at all. We cannot accept part of the Bible and reject that part we don't want to believe. There was something else mentioned in these verses; did you notice that it said "be baptized?" Perhaps if we search a little more we can find a confirmation to this statement. Let us look at Mark 16:16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved! but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now we have three requirements for salvation; Faith, Repentance, and Baptism.

It has been taught by many denominations that baptism is not necessary for salvation. One could be baptized if they so desired but actually it was only an outward sign, for a show, much the same as a wedding ring is used to show that a couple had taken the vows of matrimony. Let us stop and examine this teaching for awhile. One need only examine a few scriptures to realize the folly of following this type of theory. First let us read Revelation 22:19, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." You can easily see how the Lord feels about taking away from His commandments or adding to them. Now if we read Deuteronomy 12:32 we will find a law or commandment that leaves no room for question. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Now let us see what God has commanded. Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" and the 20th verse "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, Lo,

I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." And finally in John 14:12 we find, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Sometimes there is a misunderstanding about what baptism is for. As I have tried to point out in the previous paragraph, we see that baptism is a law of God, and a requirement for salvation. Actually what does baptism accomplish? Let us look at Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Paul, in relating the story of his conversion, tells how Ananias, after restoring his sight and explaining that he, Paul, was called of God, charged him to wait no longer but be baptized and "wash away thy sins. . . ." This was one of the first things he should accomplish. Again in Acts 2:38 we read that we are to be baptized ". . . for the remission of sins. . . ." It is quite evident that baptism is a cleansing work, but it is more, it is a preparatory work. It is a work that needs to be accomplished before something else can be received. In the 8th chapter of Acts we can find more information on this subject. I will not quote the whole chapter, just the 16th and 17th verses, but one should read the complete chapter to get a full understanding of the story. "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost." Here we see that after these people were baptized they were prepared to receive the Holy Ghost. The 6th chapter of Romans explains this a little differently, that baptism is putting away the body of sin, that we might walk in the newness of life. In I Peter 3:21 we read "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" Here we see that baptism is the putting away of sin and the obedience of God's commandments.

Let us continue in this thought and turn our Bibles to the 1st chapter of St. John and read the 12th and 13th verses. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Take note here what he says "which were born . . . of God." How can a person be born of God? Another individual asked this question and Christ gave him the answer. St. John 3:3 and 5, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (v. 5) 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" Nicodemus was perplexed over this question. He asked Jesus how a man might be born again after he had grown old. Jesus is not speaking of a physical birth, but rather a spiritual birth. This is when we are reborn, when we become a son of God. After we have washed ourselves clean, prepared ourselves, and then

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, then we become a son of God. It is after the birth of this Spirit that we walk in the newness of life. In speaking of this washing away our sins and preparing ourselves for this Birth of the Spirit, it brings to mind a statement of Christ found in Luke 5:37, 38. "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottle shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved." God will not give the gift of the Holy Ghost unto man until the old man of sin be done away with. There are several occasions in the Bible and the Book of Mormon where the Holy Ghost was received prior to baptism; these are exceptions, not the rule.

Perhaps we should investigate this birth of the Spirit a little more closely. Let us read Acts 8: 17th and 18th verses, "Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money." If you will read a few verses ahead of this you will note that these people had been baptized and were ready to receive the Holy Ghost.

It is well here to note how the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon them by the apostles, ". . . through the laying on of the apostle's hands. . . ." Again we find the same information in Acts 19:5 and 6 "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

In summary I might say if one were to put all this down in a few simple basic facts it might look something like this:

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. I must have faith.
2. I must have repentance.
3. I must be baptized and wash away my sins.
4. I must prepare myself to receive the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands.

There is a multitude of scriptures covering these subjects, I have used just a few. I know this however; if you will diligently search for these answers, the Lord will help you find the way. There is one more thing. Matthew 24:14, "But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." Also in the parable of the sower and the seed found in the 13th chapter of Matthew, you will see how some wither away quick and others take deep root and bring forth fruit. It is not only important to learn the principles of the gospel of Christ, but once you have obeyed them you might fight on, or as Paul puts it in Hebrews 6:1 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Once we have laid the foundation, let us go on to perfection, let us not turn back, but rather reach for that heavenly reward that nothing on earth can replace. God be with you.

AMENDMENT OF THE JURISPRUDENCE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Whereas, Due to a series of unfortunate circumstances a major portion of the Jurisprudence of the Church of Christ failed to come before the Conference of the Church and the Referendum; and

Whereas, The missing portion, though it in no wise changes the "cook book" procedures already accepted by referendum, is of vital importance to the understanding of the Jurisprudence, and the spirit of peace and harmony, and the saving of the soul of the erring brother or sister; therefore,

Resolved, That the present Jurisprudence be amended by inserting the words "CONTENTS" and extending through the heading "PART III. THE PROCEDURE OF JURISPRUDENCE" between the words "JURISPRUDENCE of the CHURCH OF CHRIST, Organized According to Law on the 6th Day of April 1830. Headquarters on the Temple Lot, Independence, Missouri" and the words "Section 1."; also the words "PART IV. APPLICATION OF THE LAW" and extending through and ending with the words "press charges before the elders." be inserted following the words "progress of the Kingdom of God."

Signed: Elder M. Harvey Seibel
Lovita G. Seibel

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FOREWORD

a. Part I. Introduction. This part explains the purpose and use of such rules. An explanation is made of the requirement for the principle of faith to be the guiding factor in the dealing with all offenses and sins within the Church.

b. Part II. The Law. A compilation of pertinent scriptural passages pertaining to the law of God are quoted for comprehensive reference. Such a grouping greatly aids any party to a case in reviewing the commandments and admonitions that have been given to govern the handling of untoward things in the Church. Sufficient guidance has been given the children of God all down through the ages for their government when they strive to serve their God. When they have forsaken Him, He has given them over to a reprobate mind and let them languish in their sins. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, the children of God in these latter days just preceding the second coming of the Lord, to hearken unto the things that have been given to us for our instruction and guidance that the Holy Spirit might have a part in us.

c. Part III. The Procedure of Jurisprudence. The rules of this jurisprudence have been simplified for easy understanding, ease of adaptation to any type of case, and extension of total fairness to all individuals and the Church. The rules are prescribed only that there might be order in all things, and that the scriptures might be uniformly applied to all concerned. Unscriptural provisions and restrictions have not been included.

d. Part IV. Application of the Law. This part of the total procedure is also a compilation of scriptural passages, and pertains to the law of God. The partic-

ular passages included are those identifying the many sins and offenses that it is possible for the children of God to fall into when they depart from the divine law of God. There is also referenced the scriptural provisions for penalty or disassociation of those who fall away into error and repent not. The committee members submitting this report feel that we, as members of the Church of Christ, must adhere to the scriptures cited if we are to be found to be strict in seeing that there is no iniquity among us, as was the early Church following the days of Christ's ministry here on earth. Repetitive reference to any scriptural passage has been kept to a minimum, and is used only where particular emphasis was considered appropriate.

e. Part V. Forms. A set of suggested forms has been illustrated to assist in the uniform documentation of each required step accomplished in the fulfillment of the scriptural provisions.

f. Part VI. Glossary of Terms. A list of some of the key words used in these rules have been defined as an aid to a common understanding in following the prescribed procedures.

JURISPRUDENCE

Part I. INTRODUCTION

Section 1. Statement of Purpose.

1. The Church of Christ believes the law of God is contained in its fullness in the Holy Scriptures of the Bible, Book of Mormon and latter-day revelations given for the government of the Church.

2. Jurisprudence is the science or philosophy of law. The Jurisprudence of the Church of Christ is the rules and regulations adopted by the Church to serve as an instrument in the execution of the commandments of God in the case of offenses or iniquity committed by the lay-members or the ministry of the Church. God has given the law whereby we shall be judged, and the law was designed to insure the growth of His work here on earth, to protect the Church and the rights of its membership, and to reclaim everyone possible who goes astray from the law.

3. Any recourse to the law of God by a member of the Church of Christ must be accomplished in conformance with the rules prescribed herein that all things may be done in order and with equity before God.

4. That the guidance of God might be invoked in dealing with sin among the saints, it is deemed imperative to adhere strictly to the law of God as recorded in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and latter-day revelation. Only those jurisdictional procedures detailed in the scriptures are included. Additions of man not consonant with the scriptures, or techniques patterned after the courts of the land are not included. It is not necessary, righteous, or an act of faith to attempt to bolster the law of God with human wisdom. Detailed procedural prescriptions are avoided as sources of evasive action and legal loopholes.

5. Faith is the guiding principle of this jurisprudence. An elder acting in the capacity of a judge exercis-

ing his responsibility, authority and gifts as a member of the Melchizedek priesthood, after the order of the Son of God, expects the God of Heaven to render through him a true and just judgment—one worthy to be recorded in the courts of Heaven. Even as the lame are made to walk, the blind to see, the dead to rise, and the sins of the people forgiven, in like manner and by the same authority must an elder officiating as a judge in the court expect and believe that God, who is the author of tongues and prophecy, will by the power of the Holy Spirit speak through him just judgment. Unless this is true, there is no purpose in a Court of Elders. It would be better to go to the courts of the land if we trust not God, for the judges of the land are far better trained in legal procedure than are the elders of the Church.

6. The law must be adhered to in every detail, for God does not compromise with evil. Uzza transgressed the law when he touched the ark of God, and died for his error. Nadab and Abihu sought human wisdom and built, in a sense, a human crutch for the law of God when they offered strange fire before the Lord, and they died for their error. And God has not mellowed through the years in dealing with breakers of His commandments, for God still cannot make the least degree of allowance for sin.

7. The expression of justice in the law of God is filled with many seeming paradoxes; for it is the meeting ground of Heaven and earth. It is justice tempered with mercy—divine wrath against the sinner, but the tenderest love of the Heavenly Father for the repentant erring child. Uzza steadied the ark which only the priest was authorized to touch and was struck dead by the Great Judge of all, while David an hungered, ate of the shewbread and lived. Murderers are not forgiven in this life or in the life to come, but David caused Uriah to be killed, and of David God says, "He is a man after mine own heart." "Thou shalt not kill" is a decree of heaven, but the children of Israel were commanded to kill a whole nation—man, woman and child. The law of Zion, which the children of Israel were told to live in the promised land, commanded to stone the adulterer; but Jesus stopped the mob with a command, ". . . He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7). "It is written . . . but I say," is an expression of divine love and wisdom overriding the letter of the law, for ". . . The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." (II Cor. 3:6). "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul . . ." (Ps. 19:7).

8. This instruction is for the guidance of the court, the accuser, the trespasser, and the Church. It should be read by all directly concerned as a guide to understanding the principles and practices outlined by God in His word. The defined steps are in order from the first attempt at reconciliation to the final disposition of a case.

PART II. THE LAW

Section 1. Commandments.

1. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:" (Eph. 4:11-13).

2. "How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. 18:12-14).

3. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:1-2, 10).

4. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. 18:15-17).

Section 2. Admonishment to the Church.

1. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (I Cor. 6:1).

2. "And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

"And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things; endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.

"Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which He hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of His Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when He shall ap-

pear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure." (Mi. 7:50-53).

3. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Prov. 16:7).

Section 3. Conduct of the Early Church.

1. "And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the Church of Christ, and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and finisher of their faith.

"And the Church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the Church did condemn them before the elders; and if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ; but as oft as they repented, and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven." (Mi. 6:4-8).

Section 4. The Law Expounded.

1. The responsibility of the people toward iniquity among the saints.

a. Local autonomy and rule by the people are basic principles established in the Church of Christ by Jesus. "Therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people." (Mos. 13:36). "And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them. . . ." (Mi. 6:7). Paul witnesseth to the same principles and elevates it to a command: ". . . Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Cor. 5:6-8). And, more explicitly, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (I Cor. 5:12-13).

b. The Church must take the initiative against the doer of iniquity. It is stated as a command! As such it becomes a responsibility and a duty of every member of the Church. It is done by the rule of the people. Action against the sinner is not through a desire to punish, but that his soul might be saved. To falsely let our compassion interfere with the course of divine

justice is not pleasing to God. We cannot, in misplaced kindness, fail to deliver the sinner up to the law of God. Note the following language as recorded in the Book of Commandments 65:14-16: "And he that repenteth not of his sins, and confesseth them not, then ye shall bring him before the Church, and do with him as the scriptures saith unto you, either by commandment, or by revelation. And this ye shall do that God might be glorified, not because ye forgive not, having not compassion, but that ye may be justified in the eyes of the law, that ye may not offend Him who is your lawgiver. Verily I say, for this cause ye shall do these things."

2. A Court of Elders—Reflection of the Heavenly Court.

a. The Court of Elders is an extension, or reflection, of the Heavenly court, for are we not told that the saints shall judge the world? And "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (I Cor. 6:3). By what wisdom will man judge the angels? By what perfect insight into justice will the saints determine the eternal fates of the peoples of the world? Is it not through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that guides men into all truth? It is the same Holy Spirit who guides the court in righteous judgment today, even the Spirit of Truth who guides the elder in leading meetings. Note the following quotation from the Book of Commandments 44:14, "And they shall be directed by the Spirit, which shall be given them by the prayer of faith; and if they receive not the Spirit, they shall not teach." The Book of Commandments in another place witnesseth that an elder is taught from on high and has power from on high: "Again I say, hearken ye elders of my Church, whom I have appointed: Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit: and ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken." (Book of Commandments 45:14-16). If an elder should not teach except he receive the Spirit, then neither ought he to sit in judgment of his brother without the same Spirit. "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1) holds for the judges in a Court of Elders the same as for all men. But, if a judge is the spokesman through whom God speaks, then it is not man, but God, who judges. Note Mosiah 13:15-16: "Nevertheless, let us appoint judges, to judge this people according to our law, and we will newly arrange the affairs of this people, for we will appoint wise men to be judges that will judge this people according to the commandments of God. Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man, for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of men are not always just."

b. If an elder feels that he does not have the Spirit with him to serve on the court, then it is his duty to decline lest he bring the wrath of God down upon his own head for presuming to judge a brother. Note the solemn warning through Paul to the judge that presumes to judge in his own wisdom: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest:

for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:1-3).

c. The decree of the judges and action of the Church reach far beyond this mortal existence, for it touches even the portals of Heaven itself, even unto the throne of God. Consider the awful and solemn promise of the God of the far-flung heavens, whose throne is above the stars, whose footstool is the earth, and whose wisdom and glory encompass the farthest reaches of boundless space. We read, that after attempting to make peace with a brother, ". . . if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." (Matt. 18:17-18). This could not be true except the Holy Spirit rendered the judgment through the Elder. A second witness is found in Mos. 11:138: "And if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also."

d. These scriptures delegate the solemn authority to the court to utter the very judgment and decree of God either in condemnation or forgiveness; a judgment and decree as binding as though God himself had spoken it in a voice of thunder, for it is not spoken by the vagaries of man's ignorance, but as the Holy Spirit gives utterance. Judgment must be on a par with prophecy, revelation, and healing, in that it requires the intervention of God.

e. Dare any man in his own wisdom assume to speak for God, or in his own wisdom condemn a brother before the courts of Heaven? Dare any tread on such holy ground without feeling the awful solemnity of the office, his utter unworthiness to officiate, or his terrible need of the Holy Spirit?

f. A Court of Elders is a court of equity designed by God to preserve peace and understanding among the saints, keep iniquity without the "camp" (as when God led the children of Israel through the wilderness), and save the sinner from the error his ways. It is a court where all things are done by the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, through the guidance of the Spirit of God; otherwise it is a false court.

g. As such, a Court of Elders is not patterned after any earthly court, either in principle or procedure. Courts of the world are built around statutes of man. A lawyer or judge by citing precedence can often override the principle of equity and justice. Right or wrong, the minions of the law and the courts of the land must uphold the prevailing statutes until such time as they are changed by the whims of the people, a new administration, a king, or a changed political

philosophy. Because of this difference Paul writes: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (I Cor. 6:1). A church patterned after the world is not the Church of Christ, but a church of man. A court patterned after worldly courts is likewise not a court of the Church, but of man. To compare a Court of Elders to a worldly court is a solemn mockery! For a court of Elders must judge by the commandments of God, through the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit; and its decrees are recorded in the books of Heaven and honored by God, if so conducted.

h. "For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?" (Matt. 9:5). But that the saints may know that the courts of the Church have authority to forgive sins, the elders also have the authority to say, "Take up thy bed and walk." Either the Melchizedek priesthood has authority to raise the dead, cast out devils, heal the sick, baptize, administer the Lord's supper, and officiate in a Court of Elders by and through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit; or else there is no Church of Christ on earth today. But there is a Church of Christ, and an elder can function in the court with full power and authority to reveal the judgment of the Holy Spirit!

i. Any of us when brought before the courts of the land are admonished to take no thought as to what we shall say, for in that very hour it shall be given unto us. Why then should we consider it a thing of wonder if an elder officiating in a Court of Elders should expect that same Spirit to give him in the very hour of need what he shall say, and thus render the final decision by and through him?

3. The selection of judges as authorized by scripture.

a. In the Book of Mormon times judges were elected to hold office through the years, and not as a temporary court to judge in a particular case. This was in the days when the people were ruled by judges and not by kings. Those early judges were chosen by the voice of the people as an all-wise provision by God against the rule of a few wicked persons. Note the words of Mos. 13:34-38: "Therefore choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord. Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people. And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction, even as he has hitherto visited this land."

b. In the Bible we find the Apostle Paul admonishing the locals to purge out iniquity from among them and to appoint judges to judge the people. Note the symbolic words recorded in I Cor. 5:7: "Purge out there-

fore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump . . ." And in I Cor. 5:13: "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Lastly I Cor. 6:4, adds additional evidence to the rule of the people in the choosing of judges: "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." It is the people who are to appoint the judges, if they will, and to enforce the court decisions. The apostles, the bishops, the seventies, or any other quorum were not in the Church as a supreme ruling power, but rather, as those having the watchcare over the flock as shepherds, to lead and point the right way. And when the people will not act in proper course, it remains for these shepherds to act in behalf of the Church, with the Church as a body sustaining or rejecting. But, again ". . . if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then . . . the judgments of God will come upon you . . . with great destruction. . . ." (Mos. 13:37-38). The rule was intended to be of the people, by the people, for the people, the same as in the Constitution of our cherished land. If an elder fails in his high calling as a judge, having not the Spirit, then it is the firm duty of the voice of the people to remove such a judge and appoint one in his place to occupy in the Spirit of God.

4. Principles of judgment.

a. There are two major principles of judgment which stand out in the scriptures. The first is the salvation of the sinner. Consider the words of the Master as recorded in Matt. 18:11-13, "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." Jesus put this principle into practice with the woman taken in sin. After her accusers had gone away, being convicted of sin themselves, and; "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no one condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:10-11). For Jesus who reads the heart, knew of a surety that the woman had repented. To the pharisees, who judged according to the appearance, this woman was guilty of the law as given by Moses and ought to have been stoned. But the Court of Elders is not to judge in this manner; but, rather, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24). This can only be done through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that reads the hearts of the people. Note II Cor. 3:5-6: ". . . Our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

b. The other abiding principle of judgment is the removal of evil from among the people lest it spread like a cancer and the whole body die. Again, Paul compared sin in the Church to yeast, wherein he said: ". . . Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I Cor. 5:6).

5. Admonition to the judges.

a. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how will thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. 7:3-5).

b. An elder who accepts the call to be a judge is treading on hallowed ground. He is dealing with the eternal soul of a brother, wherein a false move on his part, a move without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can bring his own soul into condemnation. As he enters this high and holy calling he must purify himself of all evil thoughts and desires and take off his shoes in a spiritual sense, for he stands on holy ground. He must search his heart and soul and trust all to God that he may have the Holy Spirit to be with him.

c. Having been endowed with the power and authority of the Melchizedek priesthood, the elder will find that the Lord blesses him in his sermons, answers his prayers when he administers the oil for the healing of the sick, and that the Holy Spirit will give him utterance when he officiates in the judge's office, for it is a part of his duties in the Melchizedek priesthood. The Lord does not ask any to do His will and not make a way for him to do it. But, even though the decree he receives is from the Spirit, yet he may be under condemnation himself if he has not officiated in his office with a pure and clean heart. For it is possible to exercise a gift even when not in a state of personal perfection. So it was with Moses when his heart was lifted up in anger and he took the honor and glory unto himself by the rock in the wilderness when he said: ". . . Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Num. 20:10). The water gushed forth and the people drank, even though Moses was in great sin while in the very act of exercising his gift. But Moses, himself, received punishment in not being permitted to enter into the promised land after looking forward to it for so many long years. Thus it can be with the judge; judgment may be just and through the Spirit but the judge himself may not escape the wrath of God if he is likewise guilty of some sin.

d. "Therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin that were in the Church, should be admonished by the Church. And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests, and delivered up unto the priests by the teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the high priest. Now King Mosiah had given Alma the authority over the church. And it came to pass that Alma did not know concerning

them, for there were many witnesses against them; yea, the people stood and testified of their iniquity in abundance. And now the spirit of Alma was again troubled; and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter, for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God. And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, Blessed art thou, Alma, and blessed are they who were baptized in the waters of Mormon. Therefore I say unto you, go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; . . ." (Mos. 11:112-115, 120-121, 137).

e. "And it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the church who repented of their sins, were baptized unto repentance, and were received unto the church. And it also came to pass that whosoever did belong to the church, that did not repent of their wickedness, and humble themselves before God; I mean those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; the same were rejected, and their names were blotted out, that their names were not numbered among those of the righteous; and thus they began to establish the order of the church in the city of Zarahemla." (Alma 4:2-4).

f. An elder who embarks on this holy calling should take warning and search his heart thoroughly, and fast and pray that the will of God may prevail and that the blessings of God may rest upon him and all those engaged in the work of the court.

6. Admonition to the accuser.

a. Sin is the responsibility of every member of the Church, and not just the ministry. It is the people, lay-member and minister alike, who must recognize that a brother is sinking in sin, plead with him, bring him before the constituted authorities, and enforce the decrees and laws of the Church. This was the condition in the days of Moroni, when ". . . they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; . . ." (Mi 6:7). "And their meetings were conducted by the church, after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach or exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done." (Mi. 6:9).

b. Thus it was done in Book of Mormon times; the people were a great force for righteousness, living by the Spirit and bringing the doers of iniquity before the elders for the salvation of their souls and the removal of evil from among the people.

c. Other pertinent references are:

(1) "And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus

stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." (John 8:3-9).

(2) "Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Matt. 18:21-22).

(3) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. 3:12-13).

d. These scriptures gives the rules of guidance for the person whose duty it is to bring accusation against a brother.

(1) Rule 1: The motive for bringing thy brother before the elders must not be for vengeance, or any other evil design; but rather one of purity and righteousness. Salvation of the soul of the offender and the purging of unrighteousness from the Church are the two reasons given in the scriptures. The accuser must search his soul to see if he is himself without sin before "casting the first stone," or else he will be abashed before the throne of God and receive a worse condemnation.

(2) Rule 2: A second rule for the accuser is to maintain a willingness to forgive; so that, if at any time the offender says he repents, he must be willing to forgive his trespass, even though it may be seven times in one day. This requires a degree of forbearance and perfection that might seem impossible if Jesus, himself, had not admonished, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48). But such is the degree of humility and love that is required of the accuser. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15).

(3) Rule 3: A third rule is that the accuser must be ready to rebuke his brother whenever he does trespass. It is no kindness to a brother to permit him to go into sin and be dragged slowly down to hell by the silken cords of Satan. A brother must be forgiven when he repents, but it is just as certain that he must be rebuked when he trespasses, lest his small sin grow from evil to evil until both soul and body are destroyed in hell.

7. Admonition to the trespasser.

The role of the trespasser is perhaps the hardest of all. It takes a big man to admit he has sinned, and to ask forgiveness. Self-justification seems the easiest

course. It is a hard thing to bow in humility and say, "I have sinned before man and God"; but the reward is worth any price that must be paid to hear the words, ". . . Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11). For these words spoken by the court, the accuser, and the Church are but an echo of the words which will be spoken in Heaven as a result of true repentance. What greater joy can one have than to know his sin has been forgiven in Heaven and erased from the heavenly books?

PART III. THE PROCEDURE OF JURISPRUDENCE

PART IV. APPLICATION OF THE LAW

Section 1. General.

1. "Every person who belongeth to this Church of Christ shall observe to keep all the commandments and covenants of the church; . . ." (Book of Commandments 47:1).

2. It is the responsibility of all members of the Church to raise their voices against and combat all sin and iniquity within the Church.

3. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things, wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperings, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (Rom. 1:18-24, 28-32).

4. "And I would that ye should remember, that whosoever among you that borroweth of his neighbor, should return the thing that he borroweth, according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin, and perhaps thou shalt cause thy brother to commit sin also. And finally, I can not tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin: for there are always ways and

means, even so many that I can not number them. But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now O man, remember, and perish not." (Mos. 2:46-50).

Section 2. Disposition of Cases of Repentant Sinners.

1. Specific Sins.

a. Killing and Murder.

(1) The Commandment is: "Thou shalt not kill." (Ex. 20:12; also see Matt. 5:21-22 and Mark 10:19). ". . . if any persons among you shall kill, they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land: for remember, that he hath no forgiveness; and it shall be proven according to the laws of the land." (Book of Commandments 47:2-4).

(2) Murder is the greatest of all crimes outside of denial of the Holy Ghost (the unpardonable sin) and when of itself it constitutes a denial of the Holy Ghost, it verges on the unpardonable sin, and becomes unforgivable.

(3) Like all other iniquity, murder has to be judged through the Holy Spirit. Murder in the eyes of God is not the same as murder in the eyes of man. The problem of definition based on motives, provocation, what comes from the heart, etc., must be solved. We cannot define all things either black or white without spiritual discernment. It seems that at times to take life is not murder. Remember the wars which God told the children of Israel to fight. David fought many battles under the direction of God, and it was not murder. But it became murder when David took the life of Uriah by proxy that he might have Uriah's wife. On the other hand, it was not murder when Nephi drew Laban's sword and cut off Laban's head.

(4) Consider the words of Alma to his son Corianton: "Yea, and whosoever murdereth against the light and knowledge of God, it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness; yea, I say unto you, my son, that it is not easy for him to obtain a forgiveness." (Alma 19:9). Murder is thus shown to be a most grievous sin, of which the Book of Commandments says is without forgiveness in this life or the life to come, while the Book of Mormon implies that there are, or may be, alleviating circumstances so that forgiveness can be obtained, but that it is not easy, as the shedding of innocent blood is one of the worst of sins.

(5) Murder against the light and knowledge of God that constitutes a complete falling away is unforgivable: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Heb. 6:4-6).

(6) Thus, the Book of Commandments can contain the words: "Thou shalt not kill; and he that killeth shall not have forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Book of Commandments 44:18). And, under alleviating circumstances, murder may not constitute a complete turning away, so Alma can say: "For behold, if ye deny the Holy Ghost when it once has had a place in you, and ye know that ye deny it; behold, this is a sin which is unpardonable; yea, and whosoever murdereth against the light and knowledge of God, it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness; yea, I say unto you, my son, that it is not easy for him to obtain a forgiveness." (Alma 19:8-9).

b. Adultery. There is one forgiveness for adultery.

(1) The commandment is: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Ex. 20:14; also see Matt. 5:27-28, 31-32 and Mark 10:19).

(2) "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit, and if he repent not, he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth with all his heart, and forsaketh and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive him; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out." (Book of Commandments 44:22-23).

(3) "Behold, verily I say unto you, that whatsoever persons among you having put away their 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).

c. Heresy. There are two forgivenesses for heretics.

The command is: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned to himself." (Titus 3:10-11).

2. Other sins. There is no limit to forgiveness to the truly repentant.

a. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4).

b. ". . . as oft as they repented, and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven." (Mi. 6:8).

c. "And if he confess his sins before thee and me,

and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also; Yea, and as often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses against me. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses: for verily I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation." (Mos. 11:138-140).

Section 3. Judgment of Unrepented Sinners.

1. The following judgment and action is taken against the convicted, unrepentant sinner:

a. Step 1. The Court of Elders renders a verdict of guilty.

b. Step 2. The Court of Elders presents the case before a business meeting of the local or other body of jurisdiction. (Book of Commandments 47:7).

c. Step 3. The church will remove their names from the records, blotting them out.

(1) "Thou shalt not steal; and he that stealeth and will not repent, shall be cast out. Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent, shall be cast out. Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit, and if he repent not, he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth with all his heart, and forsaketh and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive him; but he that doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, or do him any harm. Thou knowest my laws, they are given in my scriptures, he that sinneth and repenteth not, shall be cast out." (Book of Commandments 44:20-25).

(2) ". . . Whosoever will not repent of his sins, the same shall not be numbered among my people: and this shall be observed from this time forward." (Mos. 11:141).

(3) "And it also came to pass that whosoever did belong to the church, that did not repent of their wickedness, and humble themselves before God; I mean those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; the same were rejected, and their names were blotted out, that their names were not numbered among those of the righteous . . ." (Alma 4:3-4).

(4) "And if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ . . ." (Mi. 6:8).

d. Step 4. The church will ". . . deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5:5).

e. Step 5. The offender is rebuked before those offended. "And if thy brother offend many, he shall be chastened before many. And if anyone offend openly, he shall be rebuked openly, that he may be ashamed. And if he confess not, he shall be delivered up to the

law. If any shall offend in secret, he shall be rebuked in secret, that he may have opportunity to confess in secret to him whom he has offended, and to God, that the brethren may not speak reproachfully of him. And thus shall ye conduct in all things." (Book of Commandments 47:16-20).

f. Step 6. The Church does not fellowship with the transgressor, even to eat. (I Cor. 5:11). The sacrament is withheld until such time as the transgressor might fully repent. (III Nephi 8:60).

g. Step 7. The unrepentant sinner within the church must be silenced. (Titus 1:10-11).

h. Step 8. The door of the Church is always kept open for the transgressor, if he has not committed an unforgiveable sin. (Mi. 6:8; Luke 17:4; III Nephi 8:61-66).

Section 4. Recognition of Repentance.

1. The statement of repentance by the transgressor establishes that fact, except when the elder has spiritual insight to the contrary while occupying in his office as a judge, and the transgressor's works prove his insincerity.

2. "And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses: for verily I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation." (Mos. 11:140; also Luke 17:4).

Section 5. Doctrinal Disputes.

1. Scriptural admonitions:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (I Tim. 4:1).

"For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30).

"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the very elect." (Mark 13:22).

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thes. 2:11-12).

"Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." (II Tim. 2:18).

"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9).

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, . . . whose mouths must be stopped: who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1:10-11).

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the

doctrine of Christ, hath not God." (II John 9).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Rom. 16:17).

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." (II John 10).

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18).

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15).

"Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." (Titus 1:9).

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14).

2. Thus the Scriptures teach that there are two classes of people who believe false doctrine. There is the honest seeker after truth, as we were all at various levels of understanding the deeper things of the Gospel. A child of eight years is scarcely knowledgeable in doctrine and may stumble over many a falsehood during the process of growth. The other class are those who have known the truth and then turned away to fables of men, for they love not the truth.

3. The following are the steps in dealing with doctrinal disputes:

a. "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcized after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas . . ." (Acts 15:1-2, 4-10, 22).

b. Thus it was thought expedient to consider doctrinal differences among many of the apostles and elders, in a general conference. Their decision then went out for guidance to the Church.

e. Certain facts stand out in this procedure. They are:

(1) The two apostles who were present, having failed to debate the matter to a successful conclusion, did not attempt to force the issue.

(2) A committee or group was sent to Jerusalem, where were many apostles and elders, to consult with them.

(3) In Jerusalem dissension was also prevalent on this same doctrine.

(4) A conference of the apostles and elders was held to consider the matter.

(5) A decision was reached at this conference.

(6) The decision was presented to the whole church at Jerusalem.

(7) The whole Jerusalem church accepted the decision.

(8) The whole church (being pleased to do so) sent a committee or group back to Antioch to carry this decision to the local.

(9) And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem" (Acts 16:4); for it was the apostles, and the elders, as well as all the people that determined the doctrine of the apostolic church.

Thus the pattern is laid for us of the Church of Christ today. As in other types of iniquity, any baptized member can file and press charges before the elders.

BLOW YE A TRUMPET!

Lovita G. Seibel

"Blow ye a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand" (Joel 2:1).

What is this "day of the Lord" to be like? Let the prophets make answer.

It is to be a "Day of darkness and of gloominess" (Joel 2:2); a time "of grief and of desperate sorrow" (Isaiah 17:11); and "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinner thereof out of it" (Isaiah 13:6 and 9).

Jesus, answering His disciples when they inquired concerning what should be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, said, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matthew 24:7). Also He told them, "And this

gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

We could quote much more, but this will suffice, for all agree that the time of the end and of the Lord's great day will be a time of trouble for mankind; one of great tribulation, wars, griefs, sorrows caused by destructions of many kinds.

Still, suggests one, these things have always been upon the face of the earth to a more or less extent. Yes, that is true, but we have one more ingredient given by which to identify the time of the end, or the time of the great day of the Lord.

Jesus makes this plain when He said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

This is reiterated where John, in vision, said, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come . . ." (Revelation 14:6-7). We know that this angel has flown, and has brought about the restoration of the everlasting gospel. We have it with us. Therefore the hour of God's judgment, the great day of the Lord must indeed, as Joel says, be nigh at hand. In John's vision he saw a "destruction from the Almighty" which he recorded in the succeeding verses of Revelation 14, verses 8 through 11.

We all recognize these things as being true. We need only to read our newspapers, or listen to the broadcasts of radio or television to realize that we live in a world groping in thick darkness; a world in desperate trouble, full of grief, sorrow, gloominess; with famines, both past and present, while greater ones are constantly predicted for the near future. Some of our thick darkness is physical, as well as spiritual, being caused by pollutions of every sort. For under the vile hand of wickedness the earth waxeth old like a garment.

So what, we may ask, are the Lord's people to do? How can we meet and overcome these terrible problems? John gives us a broad hint, for he says, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

Not all of us have been this faithful. We have often wandered in our own ways, falling into forbidden paths. What shall we do? We must do something for the day of the Lord is nigh at hand, we have not long to wait. Action should be our watchword!

Joel gives us some no uncertain directions when he gives us God's word to him. Listen! And hear ye his trumpet. "And the Lord will utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with

mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of evil" (Joel 2:11-13).

Our only hope, is in repentance, with broken hearts, and with contrite spirits. This is required of us when we come to tread the courts of God. Otherwise we can not hope for any acceptance with our Lord. In such manner of heart and spirit we must appear before our God, for He says to, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breast; let the bridegroom go forth of his chambers, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare my people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God?" (Joel 2:15-17).

A period of Solemn Assembly has been set for the Church just prior to the convening of the 1970 General Conference. We should make every sacrifice possible in order to be able to attend this Assembly. All who are not able to attend can observe these days in a united solemnity with their prayers and fastings. Let us realize that to keep a Solemn Assembly is a direct command from our Lord; and that His promises are sure. Read about them in Joel 2:18-27.

There is much that afflicts the Church of Christ, but if we will permit God to gather us in Solemn Assembly He has promised to undo all that afflicts us, for He has said, "I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame" (Zephaniah 3:18-19). Also, "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thy hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:16-17).

This brings us back again to Joel 2:28-32, which very nicely sums up the Lord's promises. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).