

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 the power of the Holy Ghost;" 1 Nephi 3:187

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Latter-Day Zion

James E. Yates

While My Zion waits, there comes an hour
When waiting, only, hath an end —
A dawning of that Day of Power
When, man with man, God's Forces Blend!

For the Peoples of MY Restoration
That Day arrives, the Time is near.
I call once more to every Nation,
Saith Jehovah, Quell your fear.

Cease your jealousies, and your contention;
Claim ye My Grace by using Thine.
Withdraw yourselves from sin's convention;
For, lo, thy Lord will Prune His Vine.

Time has come for the World's awaking —
This, the Little Stone Cut without Hands;
God's judgments, now, the Nations shaking,
Sweep forth in power, to Purge all Lands.

Search ye not for some other's Canker —
With Holy Light, search out Thine Own;
Thus Zion's ship must weigh her anchor —
Sail ye this Sea to My Zion Zone.

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Editorial . . .

CONTINUOUS REVELATION

According to item #10 of the Articles of Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ, we believe in the principle of continuous revelation. Our right to this belief is a part of our great heritage. It has been passed on to us through actual demonstrations of proof by the faith of our predecessors.

Revelation was the means by which the fulness of the gospel was restored and the Church of Christ was established in these latter days. The divine will of God was made known to Joseph Smith and the saints at that time in ways that were peculiar to other churches of the early 19th century. Joseph's claim to this gift was greatly opposed by the religious leaders of that day.

Today, however, that contrast between the Restoration churches and other Christian denominations has diminished considerably as many peoples have come to accept spiritual revealments and guidances of varied sorts. Our claim to the divine channel of revelation is seldom met with opposition. We are more apt to be met with a competitive challenge as to who receives the most or greatest communications from the Lord.

This reversal of situations has caused us, the Church of Christ, to seek the gift of discernment that we might not be deceived by a familiar or evil spirit. We are warned by Paul that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. We know that it is easy

for an evil spirit to manifest itself in a false communication when man's faith is not sufficiently grounded in the truth.

The devil is a destroyer and he has many ways by which he can cast a shadow on that which is good. He can produce a multitude of counterfeits and come so close to being right that he would deceive the very elect if it were possible.

This has put the people of the Church of Christ on their guard. The fear of being deceived has caused us to exercise extra caution, even to the point at times of being cautious to a fault. There is a line where caution opposes faith and actually becomes nothing more than skepticism.

The natural man has built up a resistance against deception and he has employed various methods to protect himself. The best of his efforts, however, leave many loopholes by which Satan can get control. Our efforts to guard against deception can cause us to unconsciously become doubtful of all revealments, even those that are of God. When this happens, Satan has succeeded in blocking the main channel of guidance that we have.

It is time that we of the Church of Christ look the situation square in the face and examine ourselves lest we fall victim to one of Satan's maneuvers. Has

the voice of God by direct revelation ceased in congregations? Has the voice of man become predominate in expressing personal wills and opinions? Are we listening more to the voice of the people than we are to the voice of God? Are we more conscious of the will of the people than we are the will of God?

True answers to these questions are of utmost importance to us, because we can lose the divine gift of revelation and along with it the right to the heritage of being God's chosen people. The importance of us retaining a spiritual communication with God is emphasized throughout the scriptures. We are not without instruction on this subject.

It might be well to review some incidents and statements of the scriptures to reacquaint us on this subject. When Daniel revealed and interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the Spirit of God, the king confessed that Daniel's God was "a revealer of secrets." Amos, the prophet, said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Isaiah said that a certain thing was revealed in his ears by the Lord of hosts. Among the instructions Christ gave to his apostles before sending them out was, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops."

Peter was able to testify as to who Christ was because God, the Father, had given him that knowledge by revelation. Paul also testified that certain things were revealed to him by the Spirit of God and that "... the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

Some of the Book of Mormon writers referred to the "spirit of prophecy" and "the spirit of revelation" which would distinguish them as individual spirits. Alma and the four sons of Mosiah prayed and fasted that they might have the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation to guide them in their ministerial

work. Just prior to the coming of Christ, however, the church began to disbelieve in these spirits and "the judgments of God did stare them in the face."

The need for direct communication from the Lord to this people is greater now than ever before as we stand upon the threshold of events foretold by the prophets and seers. The priesthood especially need the Lord's specific instructions in preaching and teaching the gospel.

As we consider our present status, we find that there are unsettled questions and problems in the church to which we have not been able to receive answers from the Lord. Along with this, there has been confusion over certain calls to the priesthood. This is evidence that we are not listening to the voice of the Lord sufficiently for He would truly convey His will to His church if our faith in Him was as it should be.

Some questions have crossed my mind as I've listened to our prayers when various problems have arisen: are we asking the Lord for His instruction or are we giving Him instruction? Is our problem simply that we don't know how to humble ourselves before the Lord and ask Him in faith believing that He can and will answer us directly? Or is our problem more complicated in that we don't really want to know the Lord's answer? Are we afraid that His answer will conflict with our personal will?

Undoubtedly we are lacking in that full faith that is required of us. If we don't ask, we definitely won't receive an answer. If we ask, but our faith wavers, the Lord will not honor our prayers and we will give Satan an opportunity to intervene. At this point we must individually seek the Lord to prove to Him that we are in earnest, that we truly need His guidance and that we will obey His will in all things. The hour is late — let us quickly ready ourselves by exercising greater faith in God.

RLS

MY CREED

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know,
I want to be able, as the days go by,
Always to look myself in the eye.
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I've done.

I want to go out with my head erect,
I want to deserve all men's respect,
I want to be able to like myself;

But here in the struggle for fame and pelf
I don't want to look at myself and know
That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.

I never can hide myself from me,
I see what others may never see,
I know what others may never know -
I never can fool myself and so
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.

Author Unknown

IT IS SUPPERTIME

A sermon by Joseph Kidd delivered at the 1978

Missouri Reunion, condensed for publication

When Brother Bell asked me to speak I told him that my vision was very distorted. I have a difficult time in reading and seeing; perhaps some of you noticed when I have met you and looked into your face I sort of squinted and frowned a little bit trying to see you better. Each time I recognized a face it was a beautiful face and I have felt within myself a love as I have greeted each of you. I have felt all during my affliction the power of your prayers in the nearness of God's spirit. I want to say this much about my experiences in this affliction, though I have not as yet been healed, you wouldn't believe the blessings I've gotten, the beautiful blessings. I've walked down the street on a very gloomy, overcast, rainy day, and there is only one way I can describe ones feeling to you and that is I have felt a smile coming from within me. And I have thought, well that's a strange feeling, I'm out here walking around on a gloomy day with a malignant tumor in my head and I'm just as happy as I can be. What possibly can I attribute such an experience to other than God. On similar days I have felt to sing in just one song after another with God, and rejoice. And I have felt gladness. God has taken away from the very beginning the fear of death.

I am one that likes to look at things realistically. I like to have faith, I like to have hope, I like to believe but I like to reason all this with realistic thinking. I have reason to believe God has heard our prayers but by the same token I have evaluated and I have looked at the other end and I have said, well there's death that could be less than two years away. It just isn't all that bad, looking at death right square in the face. Because of my belief of just what death is and what it brings I can't get too sad or upset if it's not going to be God's will to heal. I don't want to dwell on this anymore other than the fact that I've been extremely blessed, and the affliction and the trial just has not been that great. In the earlier days of my affliction I happened to toss the Bible open and it fell to I Peter, 4th chapter, and my eyes were drawn to the 12th verse. I was reading this to Sister Anderson when we visited her the other day, and it reads thusly, "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." I have actually had moments of rejoicing. I suppose that may sound strange.

I want to read from the book of Romans, chapter 10, and part of verse 15, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring

glad tidings of good things." The thoughts that I have in mind to talk about, I'm not sure if all of them could be classified as good tidings. This would depend upon your interpretation. I have always had a desire within myself to bring glad tidings, I've realized that there have been times when I have stood to speak even in my own home to my own family, I had felt that I should say something that's not just exactly glad tidings of good things and I have just kind of turned it off and didn't say it. There was a manifestation of God given by Brother Roland Sarrat, and it carried this thought with it, that we ministers tend to soft peddle sometimes, interpreted in my Tennessee lingo.

I am going to speak primarily concerning the second coming of Christ. I have reasons to believe that the second coming of Christ is very near. Now I'm just going to get the thing that I didn't really want to say, out of the way in just a quick statement, in a very summarized form, "we as a people are not ready for him; we're not ready."

Some of the reasons for my belief in this regard, other's experiences, I think you will find interesting. First this vision that my son had while I was in the hospital. I was sleeping and my son was sitting near my bed. A large window was over on one wall and it frosted up and formed a picture. There was a beautiful gate and it had an upper and lower panel and a horizontal band that separated these panels and in that band was a very beautiful ornamental work. This fascinated Gary and he studied it. Behind the gate there was an image that Gary felt was Christ, and it was accentuated like this horizontal band. And he had his hands extended through the gate and Gary could see the hands in great detail, he could even see that they were tender hands; and this sounds strange but it's possible that God can give vision enough to even detect that sort of thing. He saw a very bad place between the middle and fore finger below the joint, the knuckle area as if that hand had been nailed and had been pulled off, the head of the spike or whatever had come through the back side.

I tried to decide for myself if this was a valid vision. One thing that made me decide that it was is my experience in art. I have graduated from an architectural class that dealt with design, color and that sort of thing, and a little bit about art, how that one can paint a picture that will allow the viewer to see that picture at a glance and appreciate it without forcing his eyes to travel all over the canvas. It takes a real master artist to do that, and I know that Gary is not an artist and if he just conjured up a picture, he

conjured up a masterpiece from an artists point of view.

Another thing that impressed me was the location of this bad place in Christ's hand. Many places in the hand are not structurally strong enough to hold the human body if there's a spike driven through there. The spot Gary described is one of the strongest parts of the hand; there's a tremendous bit of muscle right across there. Now I know that Gary was unacquainted with that fact. There are certain things that fascinate Gary; he has an appreciation for antiques and that sort of thing, and he said that this bar was the most beautiful piece of ornamental work he'd ever seen in his life.

As Gary was viewing this vision he noticed that I was a little restless and thought that possibly I had been dreaming. I had and I'm not going to relate the dream but I want to read something in connection with this experience that has been a part of my thinking as far as Christ coming again, and when. Is it tomorrow? Could it be a hundred years away? I want to turn over to the Book of Acts the 3rd chapter, which tells about a man who was carried about and laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful. There was a gate at that time and the gate was called beautiful. One of the things Gary saw in that gate was that one of the upper vertical bars had kind of worked over out of parallel with some of the others, that it looked like it was an actual gate, that had been there for years. So I had thought it possible that Gary could have been seeing a gate that had actually been, perhaps this gate described in the 3rd chapter of Acts.

Now right here in the 2nd chapter of Acts we read about some things that are going to be fulfilled concerning that which Joel had to say, when your young men are going to see visions and your old men are going to dream dreams. In the 3rd chapter of Acts, the 19th verse, "Repent, therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you whom ye crucified; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." What is he talking about? The heavens are going to receive Christ until a certain time. There's going to be a time when the times of refreshing shall come. How about the vision again? Well right close to the gate, and right close to the young men having visions and right there near the old men having dreams, it's talking about Christ coming again. It could be coincidental, but I have a difficult time ignoring all that.

Now how does this tie in with soon? Do you recall the article that I had printed in the Advocate not too long ago concerning the time chart and the parable of the laborers and suggesting the millennial reign

would begin somewhere around the year 2000? This sides in with an experience Brother Leon Yates had, not only one but two experiences, in one of which he saw up on top of the mountain the great figure all lit up in flames of fire the number 2000. And Brother Yates and I have discussed that and I think we are agreed that the top of the mountain, that's the time when we reach the apex. I believe he (Christ) has several appearances to make upon the earth, and some of the appearances the world is not going to necessarily know that he is here. He's going to be here and gone and the world's going to later discover that he was here and they didn't even know it. That's more typical of his coming as a thief in the night as far as I'm concerned; the usual interpretation is otherwise, that he's just going to show up and take us all by surprise. I believe in one of his appearances he's going to do a work and he's going to leave and most of the world will not know he's been here.

Now, I will first take the belief that somewhere around the year two thousand is really about the time the millennial reign will start, but there's a whole lot of things that are going to happen before that time. Some things are going to be time consuming. Sometimes we may get the idea that when God starts moving he's going to do things overnight. Take preaching the gospel in all the world; some may get the idea that a couple of weeks should do it. Now I believe there's going to be a time factor involved. I believe it must be accomplished before the millennial reign and his final coming in glory, so I believe there's going to be some advantages that will speed up the situation. It could be and I'm inclined to believe that our mode of transportation might be as it was in the time of Philip, and there you know the Spirit just picked him up and transported him into another location. We've already had a brother in Mexico transported in a similar way. I visualize that work alone as consuming several years. Then I think of other things such as building Zion, I think there's going to be a work and some years involved. I visualize it not to spring up overnight. The mark of the beast, that's going to have to occur; the Lamanite, what has to be done in the work regarding them. Well, I think of all the things that I believe have to transpire between now and the year 2000, and here's what I've done. I think I've been relatively conservative in adding all those things up and I have said, "It's going to have to take a decade at least to do that." I really don't see how all those things can be accomplished in a decade but being safe subtract a decade from the year 2000 and what have we got? We've just wiped out the nineties. And so I have made the bold statement that I believe before the decade of the eighties be over Christ will be on the earth. That's belief, not knowledge; and really it could be in the early eighties.

Since my illness I have had time to try to evaluate the condition of the Church and myself, and have

concluded that we're not ready for the second coming of Christ. First of all I have evaluated where I sit, and the council in which I sit, and I have said, "We as a council just don't measure up. We have fallen so far short in my opinion." I don't know whether my brethren will agree with my analysis or not, but I don't think they'll be too terribly mad at me to suggest that these are my sincere beliefs. We as a council have fallen so far short of what we should be; what we should have done; the direction we should have given; the powers we should have to heal the sick and raise the dead; and the power we should have in proclaiming God's word. In the power we should have, the direction, when we meet in the School of the Ministry; it's been highly disappointing to me to see that we as a ministerial body, going out and meeting in the summer time as the School of the Ministry have had no more direction than we have had. I don't blame it on anyone else, but it's been obvious to me. Please do not be angry with me because I say this, these are not good tidings, they're not the things I like to talk about, but I'm hopeful that you will listen well, and take it well, and if we are of a mind let us repent a little bit, let us confess a little bit. The scriptures talk about confession and the Protestant world talks about it a lot but somehow the Church of Christ just doesn't seem to get carried away with the thought at all. Oh we may make some general statement as I have made here tonight. I haven't talked about specifics. I could, and really elaborate on where I feel I've failed. I'll talk about one; my wife was having some pain, and on this occasion she thought to say, "Joe will you administer to me?" I said, "Yes, I'll go back and get the oil." I knelt in the bedroom and I pleaded with God not to disappoint us. I went out and administered to her, and later on I asked her how she was feeling, but no better, the pain was still there and I felt very sad about it. A little later she asked if I would administer again. I went to the bedroom and knelt in prayer and I couldn't do anything but weep, I wasn't able to utter anything, I just wept. I finally went out and administered again, but no results. The pain left sometime later but it was not because of the administration. So I have looked at Joe Kidd in many respects; who am I to think how tall I stand spiritually? and I ask myself, "Am I ready for the second coming of Christ?" Yes there are many weaknesses that we as a Church, we as individuals and I myself have. We fall so far short. I'm not sure that we are willing to admit realistically in our own minds how far we fall short of what God expects of us.

In the 22nd chapter of Matthew, Christ prepared a dinner for his people. Now briefly referring to the time chart again. The chart refers to the total day, from the beginning of time to the year 2000, the total daytime wherein it is given to man to work; wherein God sent laborers into the vineyard early in the morning, Adam's day on down to the end of time. About

the middle of that day Christ came to earth, as is customary that's when the noon meal is served, and he prepared there what is referred to as a dinner. He invited many people to partake of that meal, but it was treated lightly and finally rejected. In the 14th chapter of Luke the scriptures speak of another meal and it's called a suppertime meal, the 16th verse, "Then said he unto him a certain man made a great supper and bade many;" now when was the suppertime hour? When was the gospel restored to earth? Why in the evening time, in the eleventh dispensation near the end of the day, 1830, God offered the world another meal only he's calling it supper rather than dinner. "And sent his servants at suppertime", we're talking about the 1830's and the invitation was given, "Come for all things are now ready." I'm not going to read these excuses but there were a number of excuses offered and finally it says, he being very angry said to his servants go out quickly into the streets and lanes and bring in certain kinds of people. I want you to pay particular note to the kinds of individuals that were brought in at the suppertime hour; "bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind." What we're talking about here is not physical problems but spiritual problems at this point in time. The master is saying, go out and bring in all these spiritual cripples. They did that and the servants came back to the Lord and they said, "Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." What does that mean, yet there is room? Well it means that after all these spiritual cripples are brought in they're just a small group. It's my understanding that's where we are right now. We're small, there's yet room, and you know what we're made up of? blind, crippled, maimed, halt people. We're talking about spiritual difficulties, and it isn't difficult for me to believe that at all. It wasn't difficult for me to believe when I had that experience with my wife. It hasn't been difficult for me to believe it when I've sat in the School of the Ministry; it hasn't been difficult for me when I've sat in the council with my brethren whom I love dearly, the Council of Apostles. It hasn't been difficult for me to believe that when I sit in our conferences; when I see the lack of direction, when I see what we want to do but can't seem to get done. When we stand to preach, I hope this doesn't offend anyone, but I told Betty one time that through the years as far as just a general moral sermon is concerned, I'm not talking about opening up our understanding to the prophecies, for the most part as far as I have observed our ministry including me, I see the protestant world doing a better job. Oh yes I have felt moved by sermons coming from our ministry, but many times I have been so disappointed in myself; so disappointed so many times. I have asked God concerning my going out in the missionary field, don't let me go without power to proclaim your truth effectively, because I feel we've fallen so far short in so many ways.

I do believe from a scriptural point of view, today in 1978 this identifies us as being a people who are spiritually crippled. And by the way this is another reason that gives me hope and belief that the time is not too far down the road before Christ will come and cleanse his sanctuary, for he will purge the sons of Levi, and he's going to begin at his house; because the very next verse is very encouraging even though we're living now in the 22nd verse. I believe the next verse is just ahead of us, and I've noticed something happening in the world today that suggests to me that the devil knows that the next step is going to be God's servants going out with compelling power. I want to talk about that briefly. The Christian Broadcasting network is making all kinds of claims about healing. People are calling their counselors who have telephones there, saying, "I have this problem" and they'll pray and later on the word comes in, "I telephoned and you prayed and my problem's taken care of." There's all kinds of claims being made concerning miraculous healings and I have listened carefully and have tried to discern the genuineness of those who are testifying, and I have felt, right or wrong, that a lot of these people have had some miraculous experiences. Well I've really prayed about it. I've asked God, is there any power involved here? I want to know the truth of all things. I never really believed we had a corner on God and no one else does. But here we're talking about something on a large scale, it's costing millions to keep this on the air and people are contributing. You know the protestant churches are so far ahead of us in being willing to pay it is pitiful. Well God hasn't said to me that this or that is the answer. The thought did occur to me, the scriptures do speak of the latter days when the devil is going to be a deceiving power, if possible the very elect will be deceived. I believe the devil knows this next verse is not too far away, and is in the process of offsetting the effectiveness of what is just around the corner.

I'm going to read a little experience that my niece Carol had here not long ago. We had been discussing the problems of the Church, our failings, our shortcomings, our unpreparedness to meet Christ when he comes: my sister Virginia had been up to visit me and we'd discussed these things, and when she got home Carol called her. I'll just begin reading here, "When Carol called we were discussing all these things and Carol said, "well Mother it's just like I read recently about Jesus coming and the condition of the Church," Virginia says, "I asked her where she read it," and she said, "oh in the Advocate or somewhere, I don't remember just now, you read it, I know you read it," Virginia said "I told her I had never heard of or read of any thing she was talking about and asked her when she had read it. and she said, "oh within the last several weeks, maybe a month or so." Following is what she told me she had read: "She was standing in front of a small white church which she thought was the Temple Lot church, and she said that people were just going about

their business and that there was so much activity she thinks conference must have been going on at the Reorganized Church. She said that the cars were just going by on the streets and the people really walking to and fro. All of a sudden the sky just opened and she saw Jesus coming down accompanied by other people. She said she looked around at all the people and just couldn't believe that none of them had seen him. Then she saw him standing at our little church, right down here in front; there were people within the church that didn't see him, however, the ones that saw him (at the time she knew who they were but she can't remember now) were crying and begging and pleading with him to come inside the church. He said, 'I will not enter.' He told them that there was evil inside of the church and that until it was cleansed he would not enter due to the wickedness of the unrighteous within the church. Our people were extremely upset and very emotional and he said that there was hope for the church when the peoples eyes were opened up." Kind of reminds me about that verse I read about being blind. "Carol said she was not the least bit surprised to hear him say I will not enter and she was really much more concerned for all the people surrounding her that could not see him. She thought to herself, I just can't believe this; it was the saddest feeling she'd ever experienced in her life. She knew it was a very sad thing that he would not enter, however she thought this would motivate our people in the right direction. She knew times were really going to change, maybe getting ready for Zion. She knew the people at the time and knew how old they were. She wasn't an old person and remembers that she wasn't dressed as an old person. She said she never moved from her position on the sidewalk, she never went to him; she wanted him to come to her, she wanted just to touch his clothes but she doesn't remember him leaving."

Now, of course, there's some unusual things about it. It is very strange that she thought she had read this somewhere. Knowing Carol, in the strange way this was given, it stacks up as being valid to me. And it isn't hard to believe that Christ would not enter because of what I've told about myself, of what I believe of how tall we stand. We're going to have to see a little more clearly; we're going to have to do a little more repenting; a little more confessing; we're going to have to get closer to God someday. We do obtain blessings, I've talked about some of those blessings this evening, but by contrast to what we're supposed to be getting they're just crumbs that fall from the Master's table; it's not the meal that he's prepared for us; it isn't the meal by a long shot.

Carol will question her own experiences; she likes to be sure as sure as she can about a thing. She felt it had to be true and yet she had these wonderings within her mind that she couldn't really understand. Carol reads just a short time each night before she falls asleep. Virginia said "Last night she says she

was compelled to read the Book of Mormon, (this word compelled is underscored on this type written sheet) she had been reading in the Book of Mormon for some time however not lately, but had been reading a light novel which she was thoroughly enjoying. She intended to read the novel but was strongly impressed to read the Book of Mormon. She turned to the place she had left off reading, it was in Alma chapter 4. She started reading and read and reread verses 3 and 4. "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." The other evening Brother Frank asked us, "does the Church of Christ have pride?" "She continued reading and when she came to verses 13 and 14 of Alma chapter 5, apparently they were impressed upon her, she read and reread them also. "For behold, I say unto

you, there be many things to come; and behold, there is one thing which is of more importance than all: For behold the time is not far distant, that the Redeemer liveth and cometh among his people," Virginia says that Carol realizes that these verses pertain to another time, another people, another place, however, she is convinced within herself that this was God's way of confirming to her the previous experience she'd been given.

Without further ado, for what it's worth, it is my sincere belief based on prayer, study, analysis and a desire to know the truth, that before the eighties are over Christ will have been on the earth. It could be nearer. I hope I have not discouraged you concerning what I have said in terms of our spiritual condition. I am hopeful that we will be able to look at ourselves a little more clearly. Yes, let us rejoice in the blessings that we have, alright; but let us face up to what we are spiritually, let us face up to it. Let us confess, let us repent. Thank you again my brothers and sisters for your love, your attention and your prayers. May God bless you.

HOUSTON, MO. LOCAL REPORT

During what is normally our Sunday School hour on July 1st, James Addie celebrated his 14th birthday by becoming one of God's children through the act of being baptized. Brother John Jones walked with him into the clear waters of Indian Creek a few miles from our local church to perform the ordinance while the members watched and sang from the rocky bench just above the stream. After returning to the church, James was confirmed and we all extended the "hand of fellowship" to him. Later he told me the love shown him then was so warm and heartfelt, he nearly cried (the Spirit already at work).

As it was Sacrament Sunday, we had a lovely prayer and testimony service. One spoke of her baptism and how she always tried to serve her Lord. James' father, Virgil, said how glad he was that Jamie took this step and he was sure he would be blessed if he followed God's words and did the best he could. Sister Verna Jones spoke of the song, "Oh' Jesus, I Have Promised," and what it meant to her.

Gerry and Benny Case and Rick Olson of Independence, Mo. and Deanna and Tommy Medders from Bolivar were visiting that weekend. The young people here all got together with the visitors for Saturday evening supper and talk at the Medders' home, Ike and Mary Jane being their hosts.

Sunday evening Brother John Jones spoke to us of the need to wake up to the situations present in our world today. God said of the Americas that this land is a choice land above all others and that we must serve Him or be swept off.

It is a tragedy of our times that professed Christians are half asleep today. If we were more watchful we would not be plagued by civic and moral decay. Greed is guilty of most of our problems today. It is slowly strangling our freedoms. Leaders are lacking in good moral judgment and honest practices.

We are the ones who should be making a stand in this great nation as we know better. Each saint should be aware of what God expects of His people, His country. We are heirs to His kingdom. If we inherited a fortune, we'd brag it up. Now as heirs of God to life eternal, what do we do? Wake up to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Seek the Lord and He will open your understanding. We need the gospel today more than ever.

We must turn over our lives to Christ and God in the act of unconditional surrender, in the act of baptism as did the boy this morning. Turn to that new life. Leave behind the false gods of lust, pleasure, waste, etc. Put on the armor of light, put on Jesus Christ and walk as the children of God with a reverend regard for His holy will, following in the pattern of Christ's example, doing as He did.

If we put worldly things away, look to Christ for guidance, spend our time pleasing God, not man, there will be no time left for worldly interests, and no need to look for happiness because it will be there. So don't let your light of faith go out. Satan is no dummy, he uses any weakness we might have to his advantage. Wake up to the danger there.

Only the light of Love from the Cross assures us of happiness now and in the world to come. The Master of men awaits us with arms extended; don't receive the grace of God in vain. Don't be too busy to work for God. The clock doesn't stand still, we have one life to live, let's live it for Christ. The choice is up to us. You can be the kind of person you actually want to be.

On Sunday, July 8, Brother Frank Fann of Independence was our guest speaker. He referred to Deanna Medders' special, "Just As I Am", as one of his favorites. He spoke to us of charity, the pure love of Christ and went on to explain the many characteristics of love.

1. Love is patience. Can you wait upon the Lord? Do we get impatient when it doesn't go our way or do we ask on bended knee?

Love is kindness. Christ spent his ministry doing kind deeds, healed the sick, raised the dead, restored sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, etc. Do an act of kindness to God's other children, give your kindness to the poor, to the rich, to your equals, expect no return.

3. Love is generosity, it envieth not. Be happy for a brother's good fortune.

4. Love vaunteth not itself. Look not for rewards of your good deeds. Be quiet about them. God sees them, that's enough.

5. Love is courtesy, it behaves itself, is polite. Be a gentleman or a lady.

6. Love is unselfishness, it seeketh not her own. Be so involved with others we think only of them and not of ourselves. Happiness comes through giving.

7. Love is a good temper, is not easily provoked. One deed done in a bad temper loses much good will among friends. Offend no one.

8. Love is guilelessness, love thinketh no evil. It trusteth all.

9. Love is sincerity, rejoices not in iniquity, but in the truth. Trust only in Jesus Christ, not in the arm of flesh. Study to know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Learn love. Practice it like the golfer practices eight hours a day before a tournament. How do you become good at anything? Practice. Life is an education. What did Christ do in His early life? He learned obedience to his Father's will and grew in favor of God. Practice love. Show love. Be kind, do some good deed every chance you get and it will become second nature.

"Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he first loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." May that love of God be within our hearts and go with us today. Share it with someone today.

Brother and Sister Isaac Brockman, Sr. and Brother and Sister John Davies of Independence arrived on the 14th of July to spend a few days in the Houston area and Brother Isaac was our guest speaker on the 15th. He said he tried to avoid preaching as much as possible as he didn't feel worthy. He spoke of a years long association with our local pastor, John Jones, back in Wisconsin. He said that God had chosen out of the world such people as he and John, rough cut in many ways, to do a job for Him. He also said that he never stands at the pulpit without fear and trembling and that he knew with assurity that without divine guidance to direct him he could do nothing.

He told us that the only thought that had come to his mind of any great import to speak on was the utter simplicity of the gospel of Christ. If we would only accept it as written. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power unto salvation of our souls if we will believe it. Our souls are important and they need nourishing.

If we had the pure love of Christ (charity), we could lay down our lives with no fear and truly believe that something better is in store for us on the other side. The gospel is a message of joy to all people who will accept it. We can have all the gifts, if we believe we can, or if we have faith.

Larry Beem spoke to us on July 22nd. telling us that God's people should be the happiest in the world. Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. One famous advertising motto asks, "Do you care enough to send the very best?" We might paraphrase it to, do you care enough to give your very best? Do you care enough to come to church every Sunday, to give to those who need, or to give yourself in God's service? We should care enough to give God our best service, not for our satisfaction or reward, but because we love God.

Life is a cycle with peaks of joys and happiness, and valleys of fear, sickness and troubles. Do you hash over past miseries or center your mind on the peaks of joy and happiness? We need to do the latter in order to help others. Proverbs says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What you think is what you show forth to the world. Men don't attract what they want, but what they are.

In our lives, let's ride the peaks and gain strength from God when we're discouraged and low. Pull yourself up to God; He is our only source of strength. Lay your burdens at His feet, let go of them so He can work with you. Give up all your sins. Submit your will to His. God made us in His image and has given us the keys to His kingdom of eternal life. He loves you. All He asks in return is that you love Him and believe in Him and keep His commandments. In the end, the greatest honor will be to stand before Jesus Christ at the judgment bar and have Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Recently our guests have been Sgt. Jerrold Addie, wife, Sally and daughters, Dawn and Ellen (Jerrold is the son of the Virgil Addies who will be stationed at Ellsworth A. F. Base, Rapid City, South Dakota after September 1st. Anyone living in that area, please contact them), Janeen Barke, Branson, Mo. Florence Commers of Tennessee, Jerry Case of Independence, Alsada and Marilyn Massey of Oklahoma, Bill and Karen Ma-

lone and family of Phoenix, Ariz., Kim and Jane Ann Stancil and Tony and Louise Grzincic of Independence, Marvin Ely of Grand Junction, Colo., Lawrence and Maybelle Woiak and family, Don and Marion Eddy, Fred and Bev Hesse all of Wisconsin. We are always glad to see our little group swell with the welcome visitors.

Mary Addie, reporter

PHOENIX NEWS

Greetings from sweltering Arizona! Well the heat hasn't got us down yet but we sure miss various members who have been away. Don McIndoo is currently in Yucutan with Leon Yates. The week before Don's departure we held a special prayer service asking God's blessing on their endeavor.

People are coming as well as going here. Dewayne and Margaret Owens have traveled all the way from Alaska to be near the church. Dewayne is originally from Phoenix. Recently John and Rebecca, the couple's two children were blessed in a beautiful ceremony.

We are also happy to welcome Rita Grant and her two children to the Phoenix area.

Hube Yates Senior has made some progress since his stroke. At a Wednesday prayer meeting several weeks ago Hube asked for the privilege to stand and bear his testimony. He had to be supported by several others, and had strength to stand only for a moment; but his testimony was one of happiness. It is a great testimony of the joy and consolation of Christ, when a man from whom so much has been taken, can't be held back from testifying of the love of God in his life.

On Father's day some of us gathered at the Moser farm to commemorate a union that's grown more beautiful with the years — the 60 year marriage of my Grandparents, Don and Ruth Willard. We heard a humorous account of the couple's meeting and courtship and some moving tributes offered by the Willard's children, grandchildren, and even grandchildren-in-law.

We've heard some powerful sermons in the past months and one word keeps reoccurring COVENANT: Our covenant with God; the covenant of marriage; and the sacred responsibility of raising children that accompanies that covenant.

One brother spoke of the commitment our covenant with God requires. He related the story of a fam-

ily in Yucatan in which the father was driven from his job by persecution of his faith. The situation was so acute that he had to make a choice between his livelihood and Christ. His family supported him in his decision to risk everything and follow God. We were admonished that this is the kind of commitment we must be willing to make.

On the subject of commitment another brother told us that total commitment can begin one step at a time. He implored us to start with ONE of our thorns in the flesh and try to overcome that. He urged us to make a TOTAL COMMITMENT to overcoming that one thing.

Speaking on the covenant of marriage, another of our ministry admonished us to apply the gospel of Christ within our own households. He stressed that marriage vows are a serious spiritual matter. He said each must honor the promise to always be there when the other one needs him, treating each other with kindness, courtesy and respect.

He went on to give us a serious warning, "Beware lest we lose a soul in our own family." He summed up the effect our Christian example will have on our children in simple language "We can tell them all we want. If they don't see it, they're not gonna buy it."

Shortly after this message, the parents of the Church of Christ were rebuked in sermon. We were told we have gone the way of the world and not exercised authority over our children; and that this is one reason the church is in the state it is today. The speaker went on to explain that children learn obedience to God by learning to mind their parents.

With that sober thought I'll close my report. That's all from Arizona for this time. All of us here love all of you out there.

Marlene Oar

Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.
—Lincoln

There are errors which no wise man will treat with rudeness while there is a probability that they may be the refraction of some great truth still below the horizon.
—Coleridge

EAST INDEPENDENCE LOCAL NEWS

It has been sometime since I told all of you what we have been doing. I myself have not been able to be in regular attendance due to some physical trials that has kept me home. I can say I'm thankful to God for the blessing and relief from pain He has given unto me.

We have had many spiritual feasts served to us by our local ministry as well as guest speakers from time to time. The theme of most sermons is our need to grow more spiritual, draw closer together, for Christ's second coming is very close at hand.

I have been reading through my Dad's autobiography, (Elder B. C. Flint) for comfort both to me physically as well as spiritually, and have been able to discern where in our present day weaknesses lie. It seems to me we are more concerned with what the world thinks of us and what we are doing instead of applying the simple truths of the Gospel as taught by the Master of men. It is one thing to preach it but far more difficult to live it every day of our lives, and I feel I am one of the very weakest ones. I believe the restored Gospel with my whole heart, yet I find I let human weaknesses direct my course far too frequently.

On August 4th a very lovely and beautiful wedding was performed at the church. Bro. and Sister Virgil Rudd's daughter, Denice, was united in marriage to Gregory Evans. Bro. Nicholas Denham officiated and in the service admonished the young couple to take the Master of Men as a permanent member of their home so that their happiness at that home might endure. How true that admonition is for only through that avenue can Gol's family be happy and blessed.

The Ministers' Conference was held August 15th through 17th; a goodly number of the priesthood from outlying locals were present.

The last two weeks in August Kenneth and I, along with our son, Robert and family, were privileged to

travel to Minnesota to visit Kenneth's oldest brother whom we learned was not very well. We ask that they be remembered in your prayers.

Vacation times are over and the young people back in school yet a few families from our local were able to make the trip to the Tri-State Reunion of Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. As the event is not over at this writing I have no report from these good people as to the meetings.

September 2nd Brother Tony Grzincic gave us a very good sermon and asked us to pay closer attention to the songs we sing for they were written by inspiration and are for our profit and learning. He also admonished us to lay all on the altar if we are to be ready when Christ shall soon return. He posed the question to us all to search ourselves to see what we are as a people doing for the second coming of Christ. Are we doing all we should, are we denying ourselves and putting the things of the kingdom first or are we hanging onto other things and cherishing them above all else. He read from the Bible the passage that says, "seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all else will be added unto you" and told us we would be very well blessed in all things if we followed that course.

I'll try to be more informative next time I greet you in the pages of the Advocate. To be very honest it is easier for me to pen an article than to report news. I don't have the right knack but with God's help I'll keep trying.

Let us truly and earnestly pray for one another for verily the people of God in these last days are being tried. Let's strive earnestly to deny ourselves and be willing to lay all on the altar.

Sincerely,
Edna R. Smith

A MICHIGAN CAMP OUT

August 11 and 12 was an occasion for another church camp out at the home of Brother Bernie and Sister Laura Ritsema at Hastings. Ninety-two people appeared from Maple City, Marion, Wyoming, Hopkins, Allegan, Belding, and Battle Creek.

Campers of all shapes and sizes lined up in the backyard. We gathered around a huge campfire and roasted hot dogs and enjoyed the warmth it provided. There was a game of volley ball in progress most of the time and various games and prizes for the little ones; even the adults got in on some of them.

A group of children entertained us with a play in the evening. Then some of us who like to sing gath-

ered around the organ and sang hymns to Sister Laura's accompaniment before retiring.

Sunday morning was best of all. We lined up our lawn chairs for a preaching service. We were honored to have our brother, Apostle Archie Bell, with us to present God's message. Brother LaVern Lussenden opened the service with "Rock of Ages" and "The Old, Old Path." He said that as we are indeed friends most dear, we must be forgiving and share our talents with one another.

Then Brother Bell brought us a most interesting message. He explained that worldly pleasures are like the campfire which has such an appeal but soon burns out.

Matt. 25:1-13 tells us of the ten virgins: "Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." We must have purity. Eph. 4:7: Everyone of us has grace which is the gift of Christ and can go to God at anytime. We must go to Him in fasting and prayer for a higher spiritual growth.

The pastor is the shepherd. A shepherd leads his sheep and does not drive them. Teachers are to teach in the home and is a very necessary office. Often they are not invited in.

Book of Moroni 4:4: We must remember him (Christ) and keep his commandments that we may always have his Spirit to be with us.

Matt. 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." To obtain perfection is the goal taught to us by the ministry. Eph. 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

When we lack wisdom, knowledge and understanding, we are asleep. Isa. 52:1: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." The garments are the righteousness of the saints. We must be like good Samaritans. We must be diligent in seeking the Lord.

As Brother Lussenden closed the service he admonished us to be our brother's keeper and also to give help to those without the church.

We are meeting in the out-of-doors as they did in Christ's time being taught in like manner. We have the power of the Holy Spirit. What can we do to better His kingdom, We have God to direct us.

Prayer was requested for Brothers Ray and Norman Trudgen's mother who has cancer.

"Let Us Pray For One Another" was used as the closing song.

After a bountiful noon meal we all enjoyed each other's company for a little while longer. Then we sadly bade farewell to our brethren of the Maple City Local who plan to make their homes in Florida for the winter.

We all departed and journeyed home with many fond memories of a most enjoyable weekend with our beloved brethren.

Evelyn Lee

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MORE FROM MICHIGAN

On July 1, 1979, Pamela Joan Adams, age 15, daughter of Opal Adams, entered into the waters of baptism to dedicate her life to the Lord. The ordinance was performed at a beautiful little private lake near Marion by Elder Conley Addington. It was raining, but the sunshine of God's spirit filled all the Saints and friends present to such an extent that nobody seemed to notice the rain.

Following the baptism, the little group (32 in number) met back at the Middlebranch Town Hall for the confirmation and extending of the hand of fellowship. Communion was then served, and a most inspiring prayer and testimony meeting followed. Besides a good turnout from Maple City, we were pleased to have Nita Opper from Birch Run and Julie and Aaron Isabella from Windsor, Missouri, in attendance for the baptism and services.

Shortly after being baptized, Pam was inspired to write a poem which we all thought was so good that we prevailed upon her to share it with the readers of the Advocate. She calls it, simply, Hope.

HOPE

Whenever a storm is brewing,
Whenever the daylight dims,
Whenever the darkness thickens,
You can always rely on Him.

Whenever the wind is in torrents,
Whenever the water foams white,
Whenever the earth starts to tremble,
You know there's no need to fright.

Because He is always with you,
He knows every path that you walk.
He calms every fear that's within us.
It's with Him that we all love to talk.

But never, no never, forget Him,
Through the sunshine or dark cloudy days.
So if we endure, one thing is for sure,
He will help us in all of our ways.

He's joy when our sorrows o'ercome us,
He's hope when our hopes are all drowned.
You ask who this wonderful hope is?
This wonderful hope is called God.

Pamela Adams

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Then, the week end of July 21-22 saw a gradual migration of campers, trailers, etc., toward Marion, Michigan, and the always hospitable Jay Lee Family home. Before the final service on Sunday was over, the population had grown to 48.

Saturday was mostly spent in youngsters and oldsters getting reacquainted through joint participation in such activities as volleyball, ping pong, softball, croquet, frisbee, etc. A fitting climax to the day of fun and games was a hot dog and marshmallow roast around a burning log so huge that it was still smoldering the next morning.

Sunday was spent, as it should be, in a worship service under the direction of Brother LaVern Lussenden, with an inspiring sermon by Elder Conley Addington. Following a delicious potluck dinner, one by one the weary campers began their long trek home, having en-

joyed another week end of spiritual fulfillment.

We in Michigan would like to encourage the Saints in other areas to do as we have been doing the past several years and have at least three or four get-togethers during the year. It's almost unbelievable the spiritual

growth we've experienced since we started getting to know each other through campouts and the annual reunion. We no longer feel like several isolated little groups, but like one big loving family.

June Haines, Reporter

Happiness is . . . LOVE

Today is my birthday. You are asking, "What is so significant about that?" For me, it is a day of remembering my thankfulness and it is another day of happiness. I am thankful and happy for many reasons, and if I tried to enumerate them, the list would be infinite. It is hard to separate thankfulness and happiness because of their interrelationship. They are both a by-product of love. (Isn't it interesting to observe how often we speak of LOVE?) One of the reasons for my happiness is that I believe it is God's gift to me. Since I have had so many birthdays, I'd like to believe that I might have learned a few things that help us attain happiness and also some things that destroy happiness. I'd also like to think that my sharing a few thoughts might help someone gain a little more happiness.

Our lives should be lived with joy and happiness. Joy can encompass every facet of our lives. It is easy not to be aware of many moments of joy, and we cheat ourselves of so much happiness. We take our joy and happiness as of no consequence or we are very indifferent about it. Sometimes we can't see the roses for the thorns. All we can do is look for unhappiness. Joy can be increased by a positive state of mind. What are you looking for today? Are you looking for the positive and constructive aspects of life? Or, are you looking for all the things that displease you? Looking for the positive and constructive is a good habit. Happiness and joy exude from those who have cultivated this aspect of their personality. Others seek their friendship because it is a joy to be with them. They are as refreshing as springtime. These folks have a great influence in our society.

Happy people love God with all their heart. They love other people and people know it. As the old saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words." Love from the heart is real and lasting. It is long suffering, loyal, forgiving, and unlimited. Love is the strongest of emotions and has to be cultivated like a garden. Love is built like a house — built with positive constructive deeds. It is not an accident that we have the capacity to love, but a gift from God. Protect, nurture, and cherish your gift.

Have you ever observed and pondered why some people seem to be so unhappy? Listen to them, notice their priorities, and observe the way they think. Generally, these folks are always thinking about themself

and what makes them happy. They forget other people and how they might feel because they are so wrapped up in themselves. They are seeking counterfeit happiness. What irony, for they are losing what they so desperately seek!

We often hear our priesthood remind us to rid ourselves of worldly pursuits. Have you ever tried to analyze what is meant by worldly? If you have, you no doubt decided that all the pursuits or deeds we do that destroy joy, happiness, and love would be considered worldly. At first, we might not be aware of this destruction, but ultimately, this will be the result. For instance, selfishness is extremely destructive. When we indulge ourselves, pamper or coddle ourselves, consult one's own wishes or pleasure, "feather one's nest," look after one's own interests — all these things without consideration of others these are signposts of selfishness. Selfishness is the greatest curse to mankind. Selfishness leads us into a worldly arena that only leads to the death of what we seek — love, joy, and happiness. The scary thing about it is, selfishness can creep in when you are unaware. (That is the dilemma of the folk mentioned in the preceding paragraph.) Only with the help of God and our sincere desire for His help, can we be relatively free of this destructive force.

The joy we seek is not found in material things. A new car, even though at times it is a necessity, does not bring us the kind of happiness that is satisfying and fulfilling. The latest style in clothes does not bring us the joy we are looking for. Material things are empty and counterfeit. If we seek material things at the expense of the love of our family and friends, we are forfeiting much of what we long for. You may fool adults with your counterfeit love, but you don't fool a child. They are very perceptive. The tragedy is, counterfeit love is learned and our children soon become what they are surrounded with. They, too, will seek happiness through material things. Have you ever tried to imagine what you'd consider the most important thing to do if you learned you were dying within the year? I have. Would you fill your closet with new clothes? Would you buy and wear beautiful jewelry? How important are material things to you?

Love between persons grows strong through sharing. The result is — joy and happiness. We share joy and happiness rather easily, but sharing sorrows,

trials, and hardships can be trying. Sometimes people who grew up during the "great depression" reminisce, and they remember how hard it was. And yet, the hardships they endured together formed a bond of friendship and love that was tough and strong. By sharing trials and tribulations with your family and friends, everyone can emerge victorious because all have strengthened the bonds of love. These bonds can be built as strong as steel. With love as a foundation, the trials, the sorrows, and the hardships become easier to endure. After the "storm" is over, there stands stronger than ever this beautiful relationship that has shared and endured together. Our heavenly Father is like this. He will share our heartaches and give us strength to endure, and our love and faith is strengthened. Our love for Him grows stronger through each experience.

Forgiveness is a constructive deed toward building joy and happiness. We MUST forgive one another. It just has to be that way or else it is unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is "worldly" and very destructive. We can't build with destructive forces, for we become resentful, festering, revengeful, vindictive, and all the other ugly ways we can imagine. To forgive leads to understanding, humility, kindness, mercy, long-suffering, and all the other attributes that we consider as being the "fruits of the spirit." Forgiving is contagious. If one person forgives, the person they forgive recognizes this strength and they in turn forgive too. This is a building process. Each time this process is repeated, the easier it becomes. This is the spirit of God working with us. We must learn to forgive!

Why am I happy on my birthday? I am happy because I am free to worship God as I understand, but most of all I'm happy because I know He loves me. I am happy because I have a loving family and I know they love me. I am happy because of my good fortune to be born in our wonderful country. I am happy because I have hope that my family, my friends, and I will know a day when there will be inner peace and joy abound. I have hope that we will be worthy to live

in Zion, and we will have an opportunity to be taught the gospel with more complete understanding.

The family unit is a training ground for happiness. The family is where we can cultivate and build. We can learn to put into action all these attributes that we know build happiness. I once said to our son, "Bill, I believe you have the best sense of justice of anyone I know." He reminded me that a child learns justice when he lives with fairness. It wasn't long after that dialogue when our daughter, Marilyn, gave me the poem, "Children Learn What They Live." It says in part, "If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn. If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight . . . If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice. If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith . . ." I feel sure you have read this meaningful little poem. The family unit is a garden. Tend it well, and joy and happiness will be your reward.

Yes, today is my birthday and a very happy one because I know my family loves me. Bill managed to give me a quick happy birthday call before he went to work. Marilyn invited me to dinner. My husband, Harold, smiled and looked at me in his special way. I know they love me! Happy — what a precious birthday gift I receive every day. Then, there are my parents whose love through these many years has been of untold joy and happiness. My sisters and my brother love me, too. I can't stop there for I know their families love me. All of these people love me and I KNOW they do! What a beautiful gift! My heart is overjoyed. I know, too, that my church family loves me. Every time I go to the Missouri Reunion I am assured of this. There is nothing in this world that makes me so happy as all the love I receive. As powerful as this love is, I know God loves me even more. My happiness spills over into my relationship with my friends. They, too, respond and love. I try to imagine myself without love and I know I would be desolate! I treasure my gift of love and hope and pray I will have the wisdom to nourish and appreciate this beautiful gift from God.

Alzada Keeney Massey

THINK ABOUT IT

God is greater than all his acts of creation; and he is greater than the sum total of all his wonderful attributes.

If God does not represent love to you, he is not yet real to you.

There must need be care taken that simply talking about God does not become our practice of religion in the place of walking with him.

Kahlil Gibran said, If one invites the pleasure of ease and comfort into their life as a guest, it is not long until they have become the host, and eventually a tyrant.

During a bad storm at sea a passenger said to a ten year old, "Aren't you afraid the ship will sink?" The child answered, "No, that's my father at the wheel."

A LETTER TO THE CHURCH

August 8, 1979

Greetings,

I am a new convert in the Church of Christ as of May 15, 1979, baptized under the hands of Apostle Sheldon on a beautiful day in a swimming pool. I want to use this space to bear my testimony. God has blessed me exceedingly in my short span of existence here upon this earth. I was raised in the Baptist church and my mother strongly persuaded me to attend Sunday School and preaching services. I did not learn much about the scriptures and felt that something was wrong, because when I went to church, the teacher talked about football.

About eight years ago when I was seventeen. God spoke to me. Before this, though, I felt great torment, realizing that I had obeyed the devil, was under his grasp and did not have any power to expel him. It was as if I was chained down by the power of the evil one, feeling as if I was about to be destroyed. Nevertheless, knowing that I had done what I had done in ignorance and hoping there was a God, I spoke to Satan, knowing he was there, though I could not see him, and told him that I refuse to go to hell and I'm destined to go to heaven. Immediately all trace of the torment and Satan fled away from my presence in the twinkling of

an eye. I was then filled with the Spirit from head to foot, immersed thereby, when I heard God speak to me with a clear, audible, powerful voice as the sound of a trumpet. I have never since then heard God's voice that strongly, but have felt the promptings of the Holy Spirit at times and have had many dreams about people I have seen which I believe were warnings from God to direct my course of action.

Since that time, I joined the L. D. S. Church, and then the R. L. D. S. Church. While I was a member of the R. L. D. S. Church, I read a newspaper article which said that the L. D. S. and the R. L. D. S. owned land in Independence, but that only the Church of Christ owned the temple lot dedicated by Joseph Smith, which stirred up curiosity within me. I wrote the Church of Christ and began corresponding with Apostle Sheldon.

I have attended school for approximately two years and feel strongly that the Lord has directed me to find a job. I quit school last Friday and got a full time job as a tool grinder, shipping and receiving clerk. I hope to go to Independence as soon as I've saved some money, or maybe even before, to be with you.

Sincerely,
John S. Bulla

I WOULD PROJECT . . .

I would project Hope,
I would project Belief,
I would project Faith,
Love, and Truth;
and try to add my ounce
of encouragement.

By Faith,
By a determining will,
Hope on against failures,
Believe on when all about
is doubt.
Yea, among all reports
of disasters, of "giants in
the land" — giant evils,
giant indifferences,
giant callousnesses,
all the many "giants" the evil one
brings against us to try to destroy
the work — Our Father's
Redeeming Work.

Let us project
All Hope of Redeeming Love,

Project all Belief that
Christ has Won the Victory.
Let each be a Joshua, a Caleb,
They who were allowed to enter
"The Promised Land".

darleen smith

MINI-LIGHTINGS

There are 'Figures of the True' * in all that is about us; every physical or material experience of humankind has a counterpart in things that are spiritual; all that is seen is a reflection of some unseen lesson or truth.

An old, old lesson comes to us from the days of sailing vessels, yet in this day of steamships the lesson may be new to some. It is a fact that a sailship can make forward progress right into the very teeth of a contrary wind, IF the sails are set right. Here is a Figure of the truth that spiritual growth is greater in adversity than it is at times of prosperity.

CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The 1980 Ministers' Conference (general membership) for the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) will commence Sunday, April 6, 1980. The business sessions will start at 10:00 A. M. Monday, April 7. A Solemn Assembly will be held prior to the conference, April 4 and 5, 1980.

The 1980 Minister's Conference (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) will be held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 20th, 21st and 22nd at the Independence, Missouri, East Local Church.

WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR "ZION'S ADVOCATE"

Articles, sermons, poems, news items, letters, notices, etc. which are appropriate to be printed in this paper are requested by the editorial staff. If possible they should be typewritten on one side of sheet only, double spaced and grammatically corrected. If this is not possible, please send your material anyway. Send all material to one of the members of the editorial staff or to the general church (see title page). The deadline for each month is the 7th of the previous month.

CHURCH OF CHRIST PUBLICATIONS

Send all orders to: Church of Christ (Temple Lot)

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Send all orders to the Office Secretary, Church of Christ (Temple Lot), P. O. Box 472, Independence, Mo. 64051. Specify cassette tape or reel-to-reel. Slide projectors and recorders will not be provided.

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