

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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Thou Passest Through

"When thou passest through the waters"
Deep the waves may be and cold,
But Jehovah is our refuge,
And His promise is our hold:
For the Lord Himself hath said it,
He, the faithful God and true,
"When Thou comest to the waters
Thou shalt not go down but through."

Seas of sorrow, seas of trial,
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,
Rolling surges of temptation
Sweeping over heart and brain.
They shall never overflow us
For we know His Word is true;
And His waves and all His billows
He will lead us safely through.

Threatening breakers of destruction
Doubts insidious undertow,
Shall not sink us, shall not drag us
Out to ocean depths of woe,
For His promise shall sustain us.
Praise the Lord, whose Word is true!
We shall not go down or under,
For He saith, "Thou passest through."

—Annie Johnson Flint

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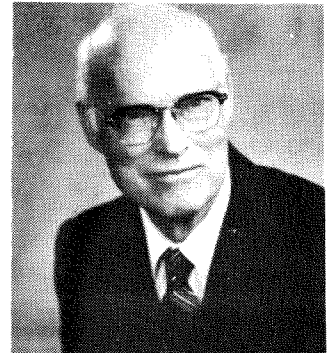
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GUEST EDITORIAL . . .

Set Time to Favor Zion



"My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come." Psalm 102:11-13. In the early days of the restoration of the Church of Christ much thought was given to Zion and things related to it. Recently, there have been made many statements about Zion and the importance of it in our dispensation of time.

Often times reference has been made to Zion in editorials as well as articles in the Zion's Advocate. It is a subject that is near to the hearts of many people. During the 1986 Phoenix Reunion the first three sermons

centered on Zion and the responsibility that belongs to each one of us. We were admonished to write and sing about Zion. The statement was made that the time will come when there will be no peace on the face of the earth and that the time to favor Zion has come. In a testimony, a sister stated that she was impressed by the sermons on Zion.

Zion should be near to the thoughts of each one of us. We should have a greater awareness of things that relate to it. In 1 Nephi 3:183-185 we read about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and that the things contained in it should come forth unto the Gentiles by the gift and power of the Lamb. "And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my

salvation; 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; And if they endure to the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb;" 1 Nephi 3:186-188.

The promise is plain that those who seek to bring forth Zion at that day shall have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. The importance of the functioning of the Holy Ghost in our lives must not be underestimated. In 2 Nephi 14:6 we can read the following: ("For behold, again I say unto you, that if you will enter in by the way and receive the Holy Ghost, it will shew unto you all things what ye should do.") The way is baptism after which the Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of hands. The promise is that the Holy Ghost will show you all things what you should do. It is also important that we continue keeping the commandments of Jesus.

"Now as you have asked, behold I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Behold I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work, and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care." Book of Commandments 11:3-4. The above statements clearly outline what is expected of each one of us. Many scriptures unite in pointing out the importance of humility, of being full of love and having faith, hope and charity. In Moroni 7:52 we can read that charity is the greatest of

all for charity is the pure love of Christ. Whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. We were further admonished to pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that we may be filled with this love.

A Zion concept may be more important than many realize. In the book of Joel we can read about a number of events that will take place before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. "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 2:32. This scripture should strengthen our faith and hope as well as to impart encouragement to us.

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isaiah 51:11-13. We need not fear if our trust is in the Lord. The promises relating to Zion are very great as well as important to each one of us.

—Apostle Marvin E. Ely

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

by Elder Glenn Gill

James 2:12 refers to the law of liberty as the law by which we will be judged if we "fulfill the royal law according to scripture" (James 2:8). A reading of 11 Nephi 1:115-120 makes it clear that God intended us to be "free forever, knowing good from evil" (vs 117) and "free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (vs 120).

The 119th Psalm declares "So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts." (vs 44-45). The Psalmist knew that liberty is a result of keeping God's law and seeking his precepts.

Pahoran, in his communication to Moroni, Alma 28:20, equated the spirit of freedom with the Spirit of God. "...give unto them power to conduct the war in that part of the land, according to the Spirit of God,

which is also the spirit of freedom which is in them." He spoke thus of Teancum and Lehi, and Moroni was "filled with joy" because of Pahoran's remarks, (Ch 29, vs 1), because the chief governor had demonstrated his faithfulness. Pahoran understood the source of liberty.

It has been true down through the ages. There is freedom and liberty for the individual through a faithful, continual keeping of God's commandments. It is a constant principle of Godly living that was understood in David's time, and by Pahoran and Moroni, as well as by James and stated with such clarity by Lehi of old to his son, Jacob. "Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall, they have become free for ever, knowing good from evil;" (11 Ne 1:115-117) "And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great media-

tion of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to captivity and power of the devil. . . ." (II Ne 1:120).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal 5:1). Like Lehi, Paul understood the role of the Messiah—that through our freedom to choose we can have that freedom which Pahoran equated with the Spirit of God—but only if we avoid becoming captives of Satan through sin. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Gal 5:13-15).

It is yielding to sin that puts us in captivity, but yielding to the commandments of Christ and his message of love frees us from that captivity. Read on in Galations chapter five and contrast the fruit of the spirit with the works of the flesh.

Jesus knew this mission, and he chose a visit to his hometown to declare it as recorded in Luke 4, verses 16-22. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.' And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

It was a dramatic and very meaningful moment in Jesus's ministry as he made it clear to those who heard, witnessed, and wondered that Isaiah's prophecy, (recorded in Isaiah 61:1-2), was fulfilled in him in the gospel that he brought them that very day—in his very presence on the earth to fulfill the mission of the Son of God. He brought them, (and us), "deliverance", a "recovering of sight" and "liberty." He taught the way to come out of the captivity of sin and dead works—the sin of lustful living, and the dead works of the law of Moses—a deliverance set before us in his words and example and sealed by his sacrifice on the cross.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom 8:11-15).

Jesus came to free his countrymen from the bondage of the schoolmaster and taught that by the indwelling Spirit of God we all may be freed from the bondage of sin and become sons of God, joint heirs with Christ (see verse 17). All of this is included in the "law of liberty" and is part of what Lehi meant when he said, "men are that they might have joy." And even the resurrection of the dead is included.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by the reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom 8:19-21).

Much more could be written about the law of liberty. I Peter 2:11-16 admonishes us to use that liberty wisely: "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." (verse 16). II Peter 2:9-22 reveals that self-willed people will be found whose intent is evil; who allure through the lusts of the flesh and promise liberty but who are, in actuality, a source of bondage. And James declared, ". . . if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:23-25).

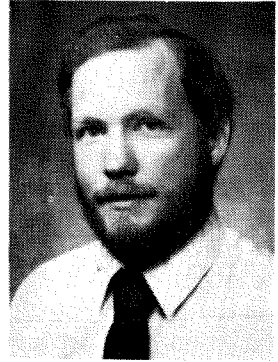
Jesus had a mission to free the captives even as Isaiah had prophesied but his followers have a mission too: one of teaching and exhorting. The whole fourth chapter of Ephesians addresses it. And when we are able to speak as indicated in verse fifteen "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ:" we will have the joy that comes from using our freedom to choose wisely. "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (II Tim 2:22-26).

"To preach the gospel to the poor," "To heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised"—"this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Advancement of the Gospel of Christ

by Elder Samuel S. Gould

Part One



"Wo be unto him that shall say, We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough." (2 Ne 12:35).

In working with the constituency of a number of religious organizations of the day, we find a great reluctance of mind to accept any additional witness to the truths found in the Holy Bible. Many would have you accept the concept that the "canon of scriptures" was complete and whole when Athanasius (a fourth century bishop of Alexandria) delimited the canon. This decree settled the dispute between the Orthodox and Gnostic factions of the day by combining the highly accepted works (the four gospels, 13 Pauline Letters, I Peter, I John, and Acts) with the disputed writings (II Peter, II and III John, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelations). This decision was readily accepted by the Greek and Latin churches and, in the seventh century, by the Syriac church. This accepted action closed the "canon" or "standard" of the early churches which has been accepted and heralded by the faithful to this day¹.

The closing of the canon was an official act that man could point to and agree upon but the strong and perceptible inspiration of writers had already ceased many years prior and that according to prophecy. "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." (Isa 29:10). The loss of continual revelation through God's servants was the first step in the drift away from the light of Christ, then came the mutilation of the words of God by Origen (244 A.D.), the rejection of the true God (325 A.D.) by Constantine for the Pagan Trinity (IHS), the rejection of the "received text" or "Textus Receptus" for Origen's Bible by Constantine (331 A.D.), the ushering in of the Dark Ages (476-1453 A.D.) wherein the "deep sleep" was fully perceptible to everyone in all ages, and finally, the 10 pagan and papal inquisitions in an attempt to extinguish the last traces of light (officially ending in 1834 A.D. in the suppressing of the Spanish Inquisition), the concurrent reformation and restoration (1830 A.D.).

As we evaluate the history of the Church of Christ we we need to keep this past apostasy firm in our minds that we in this day and time do not fall into this same dangerous drift away from the light of Christ. Let's ex-

amine a few high points in the coming forth of the fullness of the gospel of Christ that we have with us today which the Book of Mormon refers to as "the fullness of the Gentiles" (1 Nephi 4:16, 3 Nephi 7:28). The Book of Mormon provides us with an excellent accounting of the Holy Bible manuscript history which is fully supported by all information available concerning the divine preservation of the "book of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 3:190) and the spread of a mutilation of the book throughout all the Gentile nations (1 Nephi 3:171).

It has been clearly revealed in the scriptures that when the Lord would set His hand again a second time to recover His people that it would be in a day that they would be stumbling from use of a Bible that had passed through the hands of the great and abominable church. "And I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them." (1 Ne 3:157). The Bible carried forth by the religious to this land was the Catholic Vulgate and Douay versions, and Protestant Luther, Coverdale, Great, Geneva, and Bishop's versions all of which came through the common lineage of Origen who removed many plain and precious things that were contrary to the beliefs of Gnosticism. The removal of these plain and precious things was accomplished under the umbrella of "conjectural emendation" which allows one to remove offending words or phrases that you view inappropriate for the writer or speaker to transmit, assuming it was added by poor scribes or others. This same method of "conjectural emendation" is employed today by scholars of the so-called higher critical school. Bibles were very hard to come by until after 1800 when mechanical advancements in the printing press and paper manufacturing made large volume possible. At this time the King James Version of the Bible became very popular in the Americas.

It should be noted that there exists three manuscript lineages, all originating with the Aramaic text: a.) the Syriac Peshitto manuscript (meaning "the correct") being isolated until its English translation by George Lamsa in 1957; b.) the Received Text coming from Stephen's Greek to English by 54 scholars selected by King James in 1611; c.) the last coming through the hands of Origen through the apostasy of the Roman Catholic church using the Alexandrian, Vaticanous, and Sinaiticus texts in place of the Textus Receptus or Pashitto manuscripts. Most of the revised bibles of today come

from this apostate lineage and indeed have many plain and precious things stripped from the word of God. There seems to be no record of how the writings of the early apostles was translated in Greek and some have doubted whether the writings ever were in Aramaic. The early writers claim that they were first written in the language of the apostles and later translated into Greek. The Book of Mormon substantiates this and states that the translation into the gentile tongue was perfect. "And the angel of the Lord said unto me, Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God: wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God:" (1 Ne 3:165-166).

After this first perfect translation we have the apostate Origen and Catholic church mutilation of the plain and precious things. "And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is abominable above all other churches; For behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; . . . Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God." (1 Ne 3:167-171). From this we know that the translation was perfect from Aramaic to Greek, referred to the book of the Lamb of God, which was translated by 54 scholars in their attempt to bring the words forth for the latter day use. This version has translational and scribal errors which we can go back to the manuscript to monitor the translation that has been accomplished for it is the book of the Lamb of God and very precious standard of the Saints in establishing scriptures.

The mutilation perpetrated by the abominable church and her harlot daughters remains to be a grave stumbling block for the people of the world and yet the Lord will restore much of His gospel. "And after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which has been kept back, by the abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb, I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious." (1 Ne 3:183-184). Remember that much of the gospel would be restored by the power of God to be found one in the hand of God and man. "And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren." (1 Ne 3:190). This book of the Lamb of God is the King James Version that we bring to the Indian people today,

the remnant of the seed of the Lamanites. This is not all, for additional works will come forth by the power of God. "And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true." (1 Ne 3:191). Thus the record of the apostles of the Lamb that we have is true and the other books will witness to the truths found in that Bible.

"And the angel spake unto me, saying, These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them." (1 Ne 3:192). This states that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon would establish the truth of the Bible and would make manifest the plain and precious things that the abominable Church had held back. This is certainly true if one studies manuscript history in the light of the words found here in the 3rd chapter of 1 Nephi regarding the actions of the abominable apostate actions. A simple comparison of the King James Version with the Douay or Revised Versions will establish this to be true. I have a list 220 pages long detailing the plain and precious things that were systematically removed.

Footnote 1: The Closing of the Canon of Scriptures.

The word "canon" is taken from the Greek "kanon" which literally means "a reed or cane used as a measuring rod" and figuratively means "rule or standard." We can all accept the holy scriptures as a standard of our faith, but how ready are we to use it to measure continual revelations and prophecies of the Lord's servants for inclusion as scripture through all ages? One of the first stones thrown at the concept of continual revelation is that the canon of scriptures is full and therefore we can have no more scriptures! "God no longer talks through His servants!" We will most often hear the following referenced: "for I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 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." (Rev 22:18-19). John didn't add to the words of God found in the Book of Revelations (86 A.D. -based on the 10 years [days] of tribulation and imprisonment of those of Smyrna of Rev. 2:10 and the end of persecution at the death of Domitian in 96 A.D.), but he did continue to write the words of God, building up the Gospel of Christ until the end of his days of service.

The last surviving historical record of John is of 99 A.D. with no certainty of his death, although, tradition points to two tombs which are ascribed as possibly belonging to John. Clement, an associate of John, wrote this about him: "Listen to a story that is no fiction, but a real history, handed down and carefully preserved, respecting the apostle John. For after the tyrant was dead, coming from the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went also, when called to the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles; in some to appoint bishops, in some to institute entire new churches, in others to appoint to the ministry some one of those that were pointed out by the Holy Ghost."

Many do not realize that the Spirit of God moved upon John

in his last years at Ephesus to write the Gospel and the three letters after the death of Domitian (96 A.D.) and his return from exile on the Isle of Patmos. We find Moses and the prophets inspired to do the same thing after receiving the following scripture: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2). Moses, Joshua, and all the prophets down to John kept building up the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ all through the ages. Everything written had to be measured by the accepted standard prior to acceptance by the children of God, and once accepted, was used as a guide for the faithful. Continual revelation and commandment of the Lord is required and testifies that Christ is indeed the head of the Church and not man.

"... I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10). When the spirit of prophecy wanes within the body of Christ we have less of the testimony of Jesus to sustain our earnest claim that Jesus Christ is the head and director of the Church. "Where there is no vision, the people perish:..." (Proverbs 29:18). Can we say that the Bible is our standard and then not utilize that measure in the acceptance of all revelations and commandments given of God that the fullness of the Gospel may advance to the building up of God's Kingdom of Zion in this latter day?

(Conclusion next month)

ZION

by Elder John J. Schut

Bursting open like a piece of fireworks in the sky comes the story of an account of an ancient piece of history of the American continent, the "Golden Age of the Nephites." A period of some 200 years in which an ordered society proclaimed of itself, "... surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God:..." 4 Nephi 1:19. And then fading into the stream of time, this once glorious culture leaves only the monument of silent cities and the briefest of written accounts. Undergirding the development of this "Golden Age" was the impact of the personal ministry of Christ, the Saviour.

Can you imagine such an event occurring within the framework of our present day society? Assuming we had no other knowledge of the Saviour than the people of that day? without far-reaching consequences? Can you see the telex machine rattling out that paper sheet in their rhythmic beat... "Descending out of sky today near the temple in Independence... A man appeared in the midst of a number of people... and declared that He is Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour, the only Begotten Son of the Almighty God, and He walks and talks with the people and tells them of His crucifixion in Jerusalem and of His mission to all mankind..." I don't think that it needs to be said what a reaction there would be.

During the ministry of Christ on the American Continent, He chose 12 disciples (not apostles) and gave them the keys to spread His gospel. The Book of Mormon states, "... in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another;" 4 Nephi 2:3. The record of the next two hundred years is extremely brief. Nephi, the son of one of the disciples of Christ, records his account of two hundred years of history in two pages. Then Mormon, the chief abridger of the writings, picks up the narrative at the year 200 and adds his

commentary of the decline of this period.

Among the excerpts from the record that gives us some insight into the nature of this development are the following:

1. "And they had all things common among them, therefore they were not rich and poor, bond and free, **but they were all made free**, and partakers of the heavenly gift." 4 Nephi 1:4.
2. "And the Lord **did prosper them exceedingly**, in the land:..." 4 Nephi 1:9.
3. "... they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and **in meeting together oft**, both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord..." 4 Nephi 1:13.
4. "... there was no contention in the land, **because of the love of God** which did dwell in the hearts of the people." 4 Nephi 1:17

The factors that worked in these "Zionic conditions" are generalized in the preceding statements, yet some specified implications seem apparent.

1. As the inner life of these people is tuned to a unified way around their primary loyalty unto God, then the relationships in the unified order becomes infused with this inner value. And on thus fundament, peace was established.
2. Out of covenant and commitment to the Saviour, came an ordered way of life.
3. And out of this came flowing a response to the love of God expressed in the person of Christ and a genuine concern for the welfare of others. When this comes through dominantly, conditions change and become a social happening and so Zionic conditions come to stand.

And together with such an ordered inner life of commitment and Zionic harmony comes a life of abundancy and productivity. They did **prosper exceedingly**. Arts, crafts,

industry, and many other ways of productivity of such a life enriches our inner peace.

Zionic peace is a complex thing. And nothing is more pointed in affirming this fact than a glance at social unrest in many parts of the world. To point out that the origin of peace lies in the love of the Lord God in the hearts of the people, seems to suggest an oversimplification. Nevertheless, the power of love is a great force in this world today. Its origin is rooted deep. For love is all that the Apostle Paul describes in I Corinthians 13, but it contains steel as well as tears and has an enormous power. Love suffers, entreats, and endures; and fools think this is weakness. Those who do not believe in love take up their arms, and oppose the whole universe. They will be the ones that are the losers and will be broken, not love. For pure love is invincible. Love is the only power in the world that "can change men's motives as they must be changed if our dreams are to come true." Thus to talk about changing human nature may sound idealistic, but to talk about changing this society without changing mankind's nature is sheer madness. If something happens within man, it affects what happens around him.

In looking back to the commentary of Mormon on the decline of the "Golden Age" we see that the account, 4 Nephi 1:26-59, is as brief as Nephi's was about its development. Nevertheless, some generalizations are outstanding:

"...there began to be among them those **who were lifted up in pride**,..." 4 Nephi 1:27.

"...they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them and **they began to be divided into classes**..." 4 Nephi 1:28.

"...there were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet **they did deny the more part of his gospel**. Inasmuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden, because of unworthiness." 4 Nephi 1:29.

"...the wicked part of the people began again to **build up the secret oaths and combinations** of Gadianton." 4 Nephi 1:50.

"...the people who were called the people of Nephi, **began to be proud in their hearts, because of their exceeding riches**, and became vain, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites." 4 Nephi 1:59.

Some of the problems that arose could be contributed

by the following examples of social disorganization of the Zionic cause and they could be related as follows:

1. The people were unable to deal with their riches. Their pride and their material things overtook their main objectives: to keep the commandments of Christ.
2. A feeling of laxity came over the Church, meaning those who should share in the sacrament and doctrinal diverencies developed that which culminated in the denial of the "more part of His gospel." Their minds turned away from Christ and His teachings, in which the source of unity can be found.
3. Small divisions grew and the people of Nephi, once a righteous people, "became vain, like unto their brethren the Lamanites."
4. They were not able to maintain a vital contact with the younger people and the essential teachings of the Gospel of Christ. The continuing experience of renewal and regeneration was not conveyed to the younger people.

Strangely enough, by studying the record, one notices that the children who were reared during the generation of greatest prosperity, social peace, and spiritual unity were the same generation that took an active part in the social disorganization of this "Golden Age." It is one thing to achieve relationships of faith and a united cause, but it is another thing to communicate the dynamics that brought this about to the younger generation. The Christian faith is always one generation from extinction, in that it must occur in the life of each one who embraces it, whether child, youth, or adult.

In the light of the tremendous potential of our generation cast against the frightful alternatives of our time and day, the purpose of the Book of Mormon comes into a clearer light. For it reveals the close correlation between the spiritual condition of a people and the social condition of a people. For after all this is the foundation to a better understanding toward Zion. Zion is first of all, a people, a people who have by the spirit of Christ, been identified with the Almighty God; a people who will establish a pure communion with Christ and through him have become new creatures. Because of this, they do not wander endlessly in the desert of this life, they have an aim and an eternal destiny, Zion. Zion is a promise of assurance and peace will become a reality. The Zion of ancient warns the Zion of today, a warning that the greatest danger always comes from within.

The Strictness of God

by Harvey E. Seibel

It is the tendency for man to gravitate to the middle of the road, to be average or to conform to the society in which he lives. In so doing he becomes lukewarm, a fence straddler, one who moves with the tide. Instead of striving for perfection he takes the easy way. Instead of

a zeal to good works he displays a spirit of slothfulness.

Rather than living careless lives God admonishes us through Paul to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

We cannot do this by setting back on our laurels for he also says, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). For "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:3) (Romans 3:12). And since this is true, rather than going about establishing our own righteousness (which we are told is no better than filthy rags) as did the Pharisee, we must fully rely upon the Lord and His grace, for then and only then, will our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisee for our righteousness will then be of Christ instead of our own selves.

We are all guilty, at one time or another, myself included, of spiritual mediocrity. Being human, we tend to rationalize our weaknesses, our spiritual lack before God and our seeming inability to attain unto perfection. Part of the reason for this is our everyday involvement with the things of this world and the affairs of this life. As Paul himself confessed, he found a war going on in his members, between the flesh and the spirit, so that the things he would do, he failed to do and the things he would not do, he did. Yet he also testified that he died daily in keeping his flesh under subjection.

But how strict are the commands of God? And can we take our service to Him any too lightly?

Consider the following: "And Nedab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Leviticus 10:1-2).

You could say that these two priests went about establishing their own righteousness rather than the righteousness of God. Human reasoning no doubt entered in for we could reason that since fire is fire what difference does it make which fire one used? But the point is God had commanded it so and who were they in their carelessness or in their human conceit to alter the command of God?

Consider a second example: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

Only the Lord's priests were permitted to touch the ark of God and this man, evidently thinking in his well meaning humanity to protect the ark, and not thinking that God was well able to protect His own, committed the forbidden act and paid with his life for his self-righteous zeal.

A third example: "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel" (Joshua 7:1).

This anger against Israel was the result of one man's sin and caused Israel's defeat in battle against the city

of Ai. Joshua went to the Lord to inquire about the matter and received the following: "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. . . . And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel" (Joshua 7:11-12, 15). "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. . . . And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones" (Joshua 7:20-21, 24-25).

This surely seems like a harsh judgment that all that pertained to Achan should be destroyed. Yet it is an example for us not to do likewise and illustrates the strictness of God's commands. This event also portrays the gravity of sin and the seriousness with which God looks upon sin. This confirms the statement in Alma ". . . for the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (Alma 21:18).

There are other examples that can be given as to the strictness of God, but there is one example of such a notable character that we feel to include it here. This involves the case of Saul, the first king of Israel. God had permitted him the great responsibility of reigning over His people because of their unrighteous importunities. He had barely reigned two years before he had committed the first of his three major transgressions. The Philistines had gathered together a formidable host and the people of Israel trembled with fear. But Saul tarried for seven days according to the set time Samuel had appointed. Saul in his impatience and fear could not wait out the period and so called forth a burnt offering and a peace offering which he himself offered.

Then Samuel came and said, "What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself there-

fore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee" (1 Samuel 13:11-14).

Saul says he forced himself. This was clearly man's wisdom and the resultant disobedience to God caused the loss to him and his posterity an everlasting kingdom, a thing which was later conferred upon King David.

Saul's second great test came when Samuel instructed him as follows: "thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:2-3).

A simple enough command yet Saul again was seemingly unable to fully follow instructions. "but Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (1 Samuel 15:9).

God's answer to this? "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night" (1 Samuel 15:11).

Yet Saul on the next day had the audacity to say "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Samuel 15:13). But Samuel answered and said "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (1 Samuel 15:14). And Saul's rationalization for his failure to obey completely was "They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed" (1 Samuel 15:15).

And did the Lord excuse him for this? No! "Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have ut-

terly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. FOR REBELLION IS AS THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. BECAUSE THOU HAST REJECTED THE WORD OF THE LORD, HE HATH ALSO REJECTED THEE FROM BEING KING . . . And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou" (1 Samuel 15:16-23, 28).

We know the story. Even though Saul continued to be king for a time, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from him and given to David and Saul was given over to an evil spirit.

His third and final transgression, in consulting with the woman with the familiar spirit at Endor, resulted in the loss of his life. His life was a tragedy because of his inability to render strict obedience to God without the least deviation. We cannot afford to be careless in our service to God. We must be perfect even as He has commanded us. For if God spared not the angels who sinned can we think to fare better if we also live carelessly or take lightly the things God has put in our trust? Such will be accounted lukewarm and spewed out of his mouth for having lacked the zeal for righteousness which is required of them.

There are a number of notable examples given in scripture in which the servants of God did display that degree of righteous zeal of which God approves. The first concerns that of Phinehas, son of Aaron, priest of God. The people of Israel began to commit whoredoms with the daughters of Moab and also to bow down to their gods. One man was even so bold as to bring a strange woman to his brethren in the sight of Moses and the congregation. "And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel" (Numbers 25:7-8).

Of him the Lord spoke saying, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel" (Number 25:11-13).

Another example is Jephthah. "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it

shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering" (Judges 11:30-31).

This was a solemn promise to God and one that would have to be paid. But little did he realize the consequence that would follow, for after God had fulfilled his end of the bargain and Jephthah had returned home we read, "And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite four days in a year" (Judges 11:34-40).

This was a heavy and hard thing which he had to perform. And because he honored God above his own daughter we find honorable mention made of him in Hebrews 11:32-34. "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

A final example is found in Jeremiah 35. It concerns the house of the Rechabites, a family whose father had charged them to drink no wine all their days, they, their wives, and their sons or daughters, nor to build houses, plant vineyard, field, nor seed. So they dwelt in tents being obedient to their father. At length Jeremiah brought them into the house of the Lord and bid them to drink wine which they refuse to do because of their father's commandment. So God compares the people of Judah and their disobedience to the zealous obedience of the house of Rechab to their earthly father. Promising to punish Judah for their disobedience He makes a marvelous promise to the Rechabites. "Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and

kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever" (Jeremiah 35:18-19).

Having given some righteous examples from the past what about us? The same requirement holds true for God has not changed. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). We are told repeatedly that if we desire to gain salvation we must be cleansed every whit, that is, we must be without spot nor blemish. We are also admonished to take heed when we think we stand lest we fall. How much is required of us? The following is a difficult saying and doubly difficult when we are experiencing strong temptation. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). It takes a great deal of zeal to be able to do this.

But more than that, "Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, If ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life. Behold, I say, Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? I say unto you, that such an one is not prepared, and I would that he should prepare quickly, for the hour is close at hand, and he knoweth not when the time shall come; for such an one is not found guiltless" (Alma 3:48-53).

Another thing is required. We must come to the point where we love righteousness and abhor evil. There are some consequences which we need to be aware of. The children of Israel were told by the Lord that if they would serve him a multitude of blessings would come to them. Contrariwise if they chose to go their own way, cursings of all kinds would befall them including the diseases of the Egyptians. This is not to say all disease is the result of sin but today AIDS is a good case in point.

But suppose we have secret sins which we love or pet sins which we aren't willing to give up? What then? It is dangerous to cling to any form of unrighteousness. In 2 Thess. 2 He says of them that He will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. Why? So that they might be damned. Why? Because they loved not the truth and HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. Further says He, "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not" (Isaiah 66:4).

In short if we cling to any unrighteousness at all we are in danger of spiritual blindness. For there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is death. But "... he that will not harden his heart, to him

is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word, until they know nothing concerning his mysteries" (Alma 9:18-19). "Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing: unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; Yea, and it shall be given unto such, to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance" (Alma 14:103-104).

Perhaps we think that because God hears us and answers our prayers that we are always right with God. But care must be exercised even here that we are truly clean in our hearts and that we are not harboring any sin at all. Because sometimes God will answer us according to the idols in our hearts. Therefore because God answers us is no guarantee that we are always right with God.

Finally we need to consider one further thought in the strictness of God. In the days of Moses the trans-

gressor was punished unto death by stoning and this for a multitude of sins under the mouth of two or three witnesses. Today "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Though the punishment may have seemed harsh under the old law it was for our example. But being under grace does not in any way lessen our accountability before God nor the severity of his judgment against sin, for we read "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:28-29).

Let us then be done with spiritual mediocrity and careless living. Rationalizing or making excuses for ourselves will not get us into heaven. It is urgent we awaken from sleep for little time remains and the signs of the end are upon us speaking to us in thundertones.

British Isles News

Sorry that it has been so long since you last heard from us. A lot has happened in the last few months: most especially two more baptisms and then the visit of Brother Schut to confirm our new members.

The first baptism was of our dear brother Stephen Heap who was a friend of Brother Rosen and accepted the Gospel after meeting with us for a while. He was baptized in the same spot as we were, Quaker Bridge, on February 8th.

The second was of our sister Jane Kitt who has been a friend of Sister Rosen for some time. Sister Kitt previously attended a Methodist Church and was somewhat skeptical of the Gospel claims, but the Lord calls those whom He chooses and our sister Jane entered the Kingdom on March 1st. Both were baptized by Brother Rosen.

In the same month, Brother Schut came over to confirm our new members at a truly beautiful sacrament service. We are grateful for his constant service to the Master along with our priesthood in this land.

At the end of May we were saddened by the sudden death of Brother Rosen's father. Although not a member of the restored Gospel, he was a constant support in times of discouragement and sympathetic to the beliefs held by the Church. We offer condolences and our prayers to Brother Rosen and his family during this time.

Our outreach efforts still continue and we are now teaching a couple in Burnley, a neighbouring town to ours. Door-to-door work and leaflet distribution continues, though with less fruit than we would hope. The harvest, though, is still plenteous we know!

On August 1st we are planning a sponsored walk to raise money for church funds. The walk will be along a new tourist trail which travels around the boundaries of the Pendle area in which we live. The walk is 52 miles long and through some of the most beautiful countryside in England. Reports should appear in the local press, accompanied by photographs, so that perhaps more interest may be aroused in the teachings of the church. Proceeds from the walk are to be used to hire public halls for evangelistic meetings and audio-visual presentations and also to finance some more leaflet printing. We would appreciate your prayers for these special outreach efforts to the people in this area (and perhaps for the feet of the poor walkers!).

We have received many letters and gifts from the Saints in

various locals and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your generosity and prayers. It encourages us and helps us feel closer to you even though we are thousands of miles apart. To be remembered by you makes us feel wanted and we rejoice that we have such a great love binding us together. We are the most blessed people in the world and we must remember this when we get discouraged. God loves us and is always there when you need Him; just call on His Name. We know this to be true as isolation is never easy, but the strength of Christ is always there on hand, to lift us up rejoicing once again!

God bless and keep you all.

Love and prayers from the saints in Nelson.

Reporter: Kate Rosen

Tri-State Reunion

The bell at Wyalusing State Park's Group Camp in Wisconsin we found paralleling our spiritual lives. The broken bell was mended—but its clear tones did not return to sound over the hills. The sad "whump, whump, whump" sound caused us to wonder momentarily just what we were hearing. True, it served to call us to assembly throughout the days of Tri-State Reunion; but the delight to the listening ear was lost forever.

A number of our group had driven a long way to meet with us. It was Friday evening, July 3. After dinner we met for a brief time of praise and thankfulness for the trip's safety before retiring to our various cabins. For some the next sound was the bell signaling us to rise and get ready for 7 a.m. prayer meeting. This was followed by preaching by Elder Al Harris. On Saturday afternoon Elder Glenn Gill led a discussion of "Why A Book of Mormon?" Do we make it an idol, and pay no attention to it otherwise? A young woman needing to know if the Book of Mormon is true before she could be baptized asked God to let her know if the Book of Mormon is true. The Lord gave her the sign she asked; and

she affirmed, "I know the Book of Mormon is the true word of God." Another sister said, "The more you read the Book of Mormon there is no doubt." Another agreed, "The more you read the Book of Mormon the less you can deny it. When there is any question or doubt it is more clear and gives better understanding from the Book of Mormon." One expressed it this way, "I accept the Book of Mormon because it nourishes me. I know it is true! It is the Word of God."

Worthy of sharing also was a well-told testimony: "I came across the Book of Mormon about the same time I met the man who was to be my husband. As I learned about the Book and studied it, I needed to do something about myself; because of the things I was reading in this book. The man proposed marriage, knowing nothing of my religious convictions. If he would not accept me **with** the Book of Mormon, I could not accept his proposal. I told him in no uncertain terms I was going to be baptized—I could not let a man interfere with that either. The man listened and said, "I will not interfere with anything you believe or what you want to do about it." The couple were married in Independence, Missouri without any of the bride's family present. She continued, "I believe it was the power of God that put it into my heart to read this Book. It led to baptism and the Church of Christ, and also converted my husband." There were a number of others who spoke to the subject. While this meeting was going on, Leah and Doug Ferrier had taken the children on a Treasure Hunt. Sammy and Joshua Gould found the treasure. Someone compared our answers to "Why A Book of Mormon?" as a treasure hunt also!

Elder Robert Eddy was in charge of the 7 a.m. prayer meeting Saturday. His comment at the close of the meeting was, "I have learned many things about many of you that I never knew before."—it is so true that the Holy Spirit meets with us, entices us to do good, and to know each other better. The prayers and testimonies are an incentive to come up higher.

At a Talent Time on Saturday our Minneapolis Church of Christ youngsters stood tall and sang. They were every one polished to a Fare-Thee-Well, as was their snappy performance of a program of patriotic songs for the Fourth of July. Each one carried a not too little American Flag. They were: Amy Ferrier, Liza Ferrier, Joseph Eddy, Laura Gill, Isaac Ferrier, Tommy Gill, and Alyssa Gould. A quartet: Jo Eddy and Donald, Margret, and Glenn Gill sang "I Am Weak But Thou Art Strong". Alyssa Gould played "Jesus Loves Me" on the organ. Honesty was the subject of a story read by Irene Maley from the July *Guideposts* magazine. The Glenn Gill trio sang "Sing to Me About the Rock of Ages" and "If Suddenly Upon The Street".

Speaking of talent, Jeannine Gould came to reunion loaded down with exciting supplies for a variety of craft projects for any child's spare moments. Even some jump ropes for those who simply could not stand being inactive. My favorites were wooden plaques, sanded and stained and with a picture neatly applied to each one. A

nice memento to take home from Tri-State Reunion, 1987. Other talents showed up in the kitchen under the direction of Ruth and Tom Maley. Rebecca Downs played organ accompaniment for services. Merlin Eddy helped in many ways as coordinator; and as usual he and his helpers no doubt left the premises spotlessly clean.

At Tri-State Reunion for the first time were Joe Carney's father, Joe Carney Sr., and his two young sons Daniel and Jeremy from New Jersey; Mark and Rita Maley from Austin, Texas; Allen and Rebecca Downs and children, Aric, Miles, and Amy - from Grand Junction, Colorado; and on Saturday from Waterloo, Iowa, Rick and Julie Tansey and daughter Stephanie.

On Sunday afternoon the questions were to be pulled from the box—and answered by members of the priesthood who were present. It was necessary for Forest and I, and Mark and his wife Rita, to get back to Minneapolis, about a five hour drive. Therefore, I have no news of the questions and answers.

We are hoping for cessation of our hot humid weather, tornado warnings, and flash flooding before the Fair Booth project. Everyone is excessively busy here.

With the help of the organist and sweet singers we triumphed victoriously over the unmusical bell!

Irene Maley, reporting

1987 Michigan Reunion

Saturday morning, June 20, saints from all over the State of Michigan began gathering in the little white church at Bradley for the much-awaited annual state reunion. Michigan has been suffering from a severe drouth all summer, and this week-end was no different—hot and muggy. However, we had been looking forward to this week-end for so long we weren't going to let a little heat keep us from spending this time with our beloved brothers and sisters in renewing old friendships and worshipping our heavenly father. Approximately 100 of us made it.

Because of his continuing health problems, Brother Jensen was unable to be with us, but he was well represented by Brother Charles and Sister Jeanne Brantner and Brothers Robert Oldham and Smith Brickhouse. What a joy it was to have them in our midst and be able to become better acquainted with them. Also attending from out-of-state were Karen Jakee and family from Florida.

Saturday Morning

Before writing this report of the Saturday morning services, I want to say that, unless you were actually present, you can't begin to appreciate the power of the three sermons we heard. I can only hit a few of the highlights and can in no way do justice to them.

Elder Ed Toulouse, Pastor of the Flint Local, opened by pointing out that it's time for Christians to realize that we can't just sit back and watch all the things we hold dear be lost in court actions and rulings—teaching of

evolution vs. creation in our schools, for example. He pointed out that even though we may have lost the battle for equal time to teach creation in our schools, no one can take away the right to teach our children and grandchildren at home. We can show them the grace of God and the importance of it in our lives.

Brother Toulouse quoted Ephesians 2:8-9 and commented that faith is our means of knowing God through Jesus Christ. Faith is believing that Christ is who He says He is and that He will do what He has promised to do and, above all, expecting nothing less than fulfillment of all His promises.

Elder Smith Brickhouse was the second speaker of the morning. Brother Brickhouse was amazed at the message in the first hour because similar thoughts were in his mind about the gospel of Christ—how plain and simple it is and how confusing man seems to make it. As a testimony of what the Bible and Book of Mormon mean to him, Brother Brickhouse indicated that the Books give him some sense of direction, some guidance, as the rod of iron spoken of in the Book of Mormon that we can hang onto for direction and guidance in our lives. He urged us to diligently study for guidance in our lives.

Brother Brickhouse then read from 2nd Nephi, Chapter 13, verses 19-32, concerning the doctrine of Christ and how plain and simple it is. It was pointed out that we need to have a goal, and no matter what other goals we have, the main goal is eternal salvation and that is what we have to keep our minds on.

We were privileged to have Elder Robert Oldham as the final speaker of the morning. He began by reminding us that both of the previous speakers had taught that unless we call upon the Holy Spirit that each of us received upon entering the waters of baptism we will be spiritually dead, that there is no death in Jesus Christ, only in Satan, himself. Christ brought life that we might have hope only in the word of God. We were reminded that from the beginning of time Satan has tried to pollute the word and ways of our master. We were warned that he uses subtle means—he has never attacked us head-on, but he has confronted every one of us. Brother Oldham used the following scriptures, which we urge you to read: Genesis 3:1-6; 2 Ne 12:25-34; 1 Corinthians 5:6; 1 John 3:1-11; John 10:3-4; Alma 16:219-230.

Business Meeting

After lunch, we reconvened for the annual business meeting, chaired by Brother Norman Trudgen. Following are the items of interest from that meeting:

Aaron Heath was elected to the Reunion Committee for a 3-year term.

June Haines was reelected Secretary-Reporter for the 1987-88 year.

Ravenna was selected as the site for the 1988 Michigan State Reunion.

Song Service – Special Music

Following the business meeting, the rest of the after-

noon was devoted to a song service under the direction of Brother LaVern Lussenden. In addition to singing by the congregation, the following participated with special music: Ken and June Haines; Mary Lee and Laura Ritsema; The Lussenden Quartet, accompanied by Gwen Ballard; the Bradley children's Sunday School class; Sam Jakee; Brothers Robert Oldham and Smith Brickhouse; Al Bergey and Evelyn, Alicia, Tina, and Keven Lee; Duane and Larry Lee.

To close the service, the Lussenden Quartet sang "Learning to Lean," with the congregation joining in on the final chorus, following by prayer by Elder Gale Brantner.

Sunday

We experienced some welcome relief from the heat Sunday, following a light rain Saturday night, as we gathered at the church for a sacrament service.

Elder Gale Brantner was introduced as the speaker for the morning. He used the following scriptures, which we urge you to read in their entirety: Matthew 28:18-20; Mosiah 1:48-56; Jacob 2:38, 39, 50-51; Mosiah 2:48-50; Mosiah 3:4, 6, 8-12; 3 Ne 8:32-36, 39-43.

God has promised us great blessings if we will obey his commandments. We were urged to ask ourselves if we are keeping all of God's commandments. It was also pointed out that if we don't know all of God's commandments we cannot willfully obey. If we want to partake of God's blessings, we must study and know what those commandments are and then, having learned, we must obey. It is a simple commandment to live the gospel of Christ if we understand what God is asking us to do.

We have two promises: one gives us great blessings if we obey, and the other great cursings if we do not.

When we were baptized, we promised God we would obey his commandments all the days of our lives—not just some, but ALL of God's commandments. We are told to take upon us the name of Christ and be obedient unto the end of our lives.

We are commanded to partake of the sacrament, and if we refuse we are refusing to obey and are breaking a commandment of Christ.

Following serving of the emblems by Brothers Lussenden and Pinder, the meeting was opened to a season of prayer and testimony. It was a truly inspirational service, with enthusiastic participation by young and old alike. Several were administered to and testified of great blessings they received as a result.

We reluctantly closed this beautiful service with the singing of "Give of Your Best to the Master," followed by prayer by Elder Charles Brantner.

Again we would like to praise God for the wonderful spirit we enjoyed throughout the entire reunion. Things just didn't seem the same without the presence of our dear Brother Jensen, but we're grateful for those who filled in so capably for him. Our prayers go out to all of them in their mission to "spread the gospel throughout all the world." A special thanks, again, to the "Bradley Bunch" for their special brand of hospitality which we

enjoy so much. We are looking forward to seeing you all again next year at Ravenna. God bless.

Reported by June Haines



YPCL Activities

Friday, the 29th of May, the young people woke at three-thirty in the morning and loaded onto a bus for a long trip to Southern Missouri in expectation of a day of fun in the sun at Silver Dollar City. Come three-thirty in the afternoon the young people voted that a day of fun in the sun would be better spent at the water slide at our campground. Following this and other activities, we ate a nourishing dinner of hot dogs and cookies, enjoyed a short devotional, and retired for the night.

The following morning the young people attended church in Springfield. Brother Beem delivered a stirring sermon directed in good part to the young people. After church, a picnic at a park was seen to: delicious food was devoured, swings were swung, and leisurely strolls 'neath quaint lampposts taken. After which, it was but a matter of push and shove and the bus was filled, and we were wending our way homeward once again. We give thanks to the Lord for his constant protection and watch-care over us on the roads and in our activities.

Submitted by Harvey L. Seibel

June 6th, the young people met at Jim and Sharon Smith's along with the East Independence local and the Temple Lot local for a baseball game. There was a good showing from both locals with all ages represented. Those who didn't play enjoyed watching and visiting ... "and a good time was had by all!"

Submitted by Becky Sheldon

On June 21, at 12:30 p.m., the young people were supposed to meet at a bank parking lot on Sterling and 24 highway to wash cars. But as it turned out, it poured down rain. Which wasn't a big let down to a lot of people, as only Randy and Becky and their two kids and my brother Nathaniel and I were the only ones that showed up.

Submitted by Benjamin Seibel

The 27th of June was a full day for the YPCL. After a car wash for a money raising project, we met at Mike and Belinda Smith's house. We had a picnic and a game of volleyball. Then we had a rousing trivia contest that we had studied for over the book of Ether. It was between Mike Smith's and Harvey Seibel's Sunday School classes. The older class won (just barely!), but we all had a good time.

Submitted by Heidi Temple

The Camp also had many wonderful spiritual services. The first service was a prayer meeting, specifically asking God's blessing upon the Camp. There were two preaching services with Elder Hubert Yates and Priest Randy Sheldon as the speakers.

A special service was held Saturday afternoon in which several young people gave their testimonies. Most of them expressed their thanks for being at the Camp. One young brother reminded us what a hindrance procrastination can be in our lives. We shouldn't put off doing good or serving the Lord for none of us know how long we will be privileged to live.

Saturday evening we had a campfire service with Elder Jay Moser in charge. Brother Moser brought to our attention that we as a people talk about loving one another and we hear many sermons preached about charity. His desire for that service was that we might share with each other how we had practiced charity in our every day lives. Many testimonies were given that gave us insight on how to put love into practice. Sunday morning, bright and early, there was a sacrament service with Elder Smith Brickhouse in charge.

There were young people from Colorado and Show Low, Arizona, also attending the Camp. All who attended, both young and old, felt very blessed to have been there.

Submitted by Becky Sheldon

July 11: The planned activity was a tour of the Vaile Mansion in Independence. We were to meet at the Temple Lot at one o'clock in the afternoon. Very few showed up, so we talked a bit about the Vaile Mansion with Elder J. Maynard Case. Afterwards, we went outdoors and sat on the porch and discussed the upcoming treasure hunt and weddings.

We decided to postpone the tour of the mansion until a time when more people would be in town and could come, since some of the kids were still in Arizona and hadn't come back after the Camp For All Ages.

Submitted by Ruthie Seibel

July 25, the young people had a study at Ron and Darl Temple's house. Holly Smith and Ruth Seibel were in charge. Holly's study was about rejoicing, and Ruth's was about faith. When Holly was in charge, she played a children's song about rejoicing, read a passage from the Bible, and then gave us all a slip of paper and a pen, and asked us to write five things about which we rejoiced. Then she asked a few people to read what they had written.

Ruth talked about the importance of faith in the last days, the meaning of faith, how to obtain it, and that without it, it is impossible to please God.

Submitted by Benjamin Seibel

A number of the Young People from the Independence area were able to attend the Arizona Camp for All Ages on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July. The Camp was filled with many fun activities. Some of those activities included softball, swimming, capture the flag, hiking, a wagon ride, and a campfire with skits and games.

CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The 1988 Ministers' Conference (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 3. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 4. A Solemn Assembly will be held prior to the conference, April 1 and 2.

The 1987 Ministers' Conference (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 19 through 21 at Independence, Missouri.

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Send all orders to the General Sunday School Association c/o Becky Sheldon, Rt. 1, Box 315, Grain Valley, MO 64029. All materials are free of charge to members of the Church of Christ, except as indicated. Write for more information, or see Synopsis in June, 1985, Zion's Advocate.

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