

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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Stand upon that solid foundation that Jesus Christ laid...hang on, regardless of what may come to pass in the church or in the world or wherever you may be, hang on to that solid foundation and continue to keep the commandments of God in detail that you and I may stand under divine providence and protection and

care.... Let's be faithful, and if we are faithful some of the fears that come into our heart and our mind shall be solved and liquidated if you and I get ahold of the rod of iron that Lehi saw and cling to it unto the end of the way as he did.

—*Excerpt from a sermon delivered by Apostle T. J. Jordan at a Colorado Reunion on June 11, 1966.*

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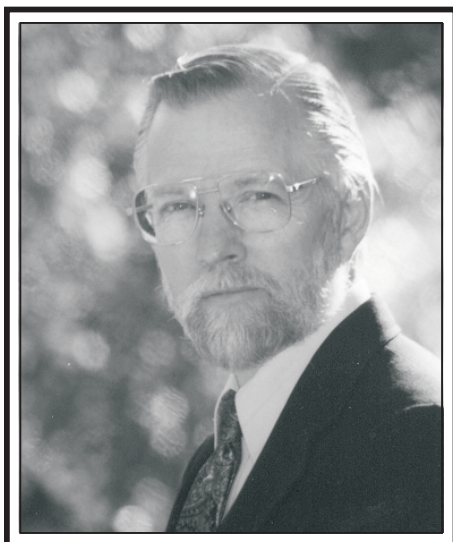
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour;
To promote His Teachings & His Church, the Church of Christ;
To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

The Choice Seer— Who Is He?



By Harvey E. Seibel

Lehi speaks to his son Joseph, his last born, brother of Nephi. He promises that the seed of his little son shall not utterly be destroyed.

“And now I speak unto you, Joseph, my last born. Thou wast born in the wilderness of mine afflictions; yea, in the days of my greatest sorrow did thy mother bear thee. And may the Lord consecrate also unto thee this land, which is a

most precious land, for thine inheritance and the inheritance of thy seed with thy brethren, for thy security for ever, if it so be that ye shall keep the commandments of the Holy One of Israel. And now, Joseph, my last born, whom I have brought out of the wilderness of mine afflictions, may the Lord bless thee for ever, for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed” (2 Ne 2:1-4).

Lehi now speaks of his forefather Joseph of Egypt and of the Messiah; also of the righteous branch, the Nephites, which would be raised up unto him, that in the latter days Christ would be made manifest to them to bring them out of darkness.

“For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph, who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord, which he made unto Joseph; wherefore, Joseph truly saw our

Even as Moses was used of God to bring Israel out of the captivity of Egypt, so Joseph was used of God to bring forth the church again out of the wilderness of apostasy (spiritual captivity) and to restore again the authority to administer in the things of God.

day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins, the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; Not the Messiah, but a

branch which was to be broken off; nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, That the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light; yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom” (2 Ne 2:5-9).

Of this Joseph (Lehi's forefather), a choice seer will be raised up unto his seed out of his loins who shall be esteemed highly among his seed. And God will give commandment unto this Seer that he shall do a work for his seed, the Seer's brethren, which shall bring them to know the covenants, which God had made with their fathers. *(It should be noted that the seed of Joseph and the Seer's brethren include both Ephraim and Manasseh. Ezekiel 37 tells us that the stick of Joseph was to be in the hand of Ephraim. Joseph Smith and those early elders were of the lineage of Ephraim and were called forth from out of the Gentiles.)*

“For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins. Yea, Joseph truly said, Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment, that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth

unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers (2 Ne 2:10-12).

When the Gentiles and the Lamanites came to the knowledge of the Book of Mormon record they would then know that God had commenced His work in restoring His people of the house of Israel.

God will also give this Seer a commandment that he shall do none other work save that which God commands. And thus God will make him great in His eyes for he shall do His work. *(The Book of Commandments records that this Seer had a gift to translate the book, that he was commanded he should pretend to no other gift for it would not be granted. The very fact that he had possession of the Urim and Thummim made him a Seer by Book of Mormon definition. Even more noteworthy, he was the first man in over 2,000 years to possess those instruments, and the work he accomplished through the power*

of God in bringing forth the church out of the wilderness of apostasy, and commencing the great and marvelous work of these last days, definitely makes him ‘choice’ as declared by this prophecy. Despite his weaknesses, he did accomplish the work of bringing forth the Book of Mormon and the setting up of His church in accordance with the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation (God's work). However, after having done so he immediately went into many great and grievous errors, beginning on day one when he allowed himself to be ordained prophet, seer, and revelator in place of the twelve whom they were previously commanded to seek out. The prophecy does not say that he would not do other works, only that he would receive a commandment that he should do none other work, a commandment which he subsequently disobeyed.)

“And I will give unto him a commandment, that he shall do none other work save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes: for he shall do my work” (2 Ne 2:13-14).

This Seer is to be great like unto the Moses who delivered Israel out of Egypt. He will be raised up out of the seed of Joseph and shall be given power to bring forth His word unto the seed of Joseph and to convince them of the Bible, which shall have already gone forth among them.

(Even as Moses was used of God to bring Israel out of the

captivity of Egypt, so Joseph was used of God to bring forth the church again out of the wilderness of apostasy [spiritual captivity] and to restore again the authority to administer in the things of God. Thus judgment was restored to the saints after an absence of 1260 years. Many thousands of the seed of Joseph of Ephraimite extraction were convinced of the Book of Mormon and that it confirmed the record of the Bible, which they already received. This same record will also convince the people of Manasseh of these same things. **The question is when?** The answer is found in the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi, chapters 9 and 10 and in 1 Nephi, chapter 7. In the former scripture Christ gave a sign when these things were about to take place. When the Gentiles and the Lamanites came to the knowledge of the Book of Mormon record they would then know that God had commenced His work in restoring His people of the house of Israel. And when that day would come, then one who would be marred more than any man would do his work among the kings of the earth [not yet accomplished]. This would be followed by the rising up of the remnant of Jacob as a lion among the Gentiles, but among repentant Gentiles the church would now be established. **[It should be understood that even though the church was restored in 1829/30, it was not established because of transgression. Two events were to transpire before the church**

could be established: first, the work of the marred servant, and second, the coming forth of the remnant of Jacob]. As soon as the church

It should be understood that even though the church was restored in 1829/30, it was not established because of transgression.

is established the city New Jerusalem will be built. Then the Lamanites will be gathered in unto the city, followed by the appearance of Christ in their midst. Then the work of the Father will commence among the lost tribes of Israel to bring them to the knowledge of the gospel and to gather them home to the lands of their inheritance. But even more pointedly, Nephi tells us God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles upon the face of this land and by them 'our seed will be scattered.' And after 'our seed' is scattered, God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth to 'our seed.' It is likened to them being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms, and upon their shoulders. It should be noted that the scattering of

the Lamanites was not accomplished in the days of Joseph Smith, for the western frontier was the Missouri/Kansas line. It was not until the battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 that the last of the free Indians were captured and put on reservations. The great work among the Lamanites was not to take place until after they had been fully scattered. This work could not have been fulfilled in the days of Joseph Smith.)

"And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel. And Moses will I raise up, to deliver thy people out of the land of Egypt. But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; And not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them" (2 Ne 2:15-18).

But first the seed of Judah and the seed of Manasseh shall write, and these two writings shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among Joseph's seed. These two writings, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, will bring his seed to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days and of the covenants of the Lord to them. (The Bible and Book of Mormon were to grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, end-

ing contentions and establishing peace. Obviously this has not happened as yet. **But consider the words of this latter day revelation given in March 1829:** “And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down all lyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envyings, and strifes, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old.” Unfortunately the people of that generation did harden their hearts for they set up a one man mouthpiece of God in the place of the twelve which they had been commanded to seek out, and from then they went on from error to error until the church was nearly destroyed, all in the short space of 14 years. But when we become wholly obedient then those words concerning the Bible and the Book of Mormon will be fulfilled. Then we shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

“Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; And that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together; Unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, And bringing them to the knowledge of

their fathers in the latter days; And also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord” (2 Ne 2:19-23).

Two events were to transpire before the church could be established: first, the work of the marred servant, and second, the coming forth of the remnant of Jacob.

The Seer, being weak, was to be made strong in that day when this work was to commence. And those that seek to destroy him will be confounded. God’s promise concerning that Seer was certain of fulfillment. He would be named for his father in Egypt. He would also carry his father’s name. He would be like his namesake for the thing, which the Lord would bring forth by his hand. (Joseph was made strong in the commencement of this work, as it says here, but when that work was nearly completed, he allowed himself to be persuaded in matters which God had previously, on more than one occasion, warned him of, and that was not to listen to the persuasions of men. And so he fell from

his high calling. Yet those who sought to destroy him were confounded over and over and frustrated in every attempt they made. But in the end, because his transgressions were multiplied, his enemies, at the last, prevailed against him. Even then those who were involved in his death suffered terribly the remainder of their lives, and died miserable deaths. Some regretted that they ever had a part in that affair. This tragic end to Joseph was also according to scripture, so that both the former word and the latter word were true. His enemies were confounded, but he himself also was destroyed. “Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will an-

swer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him” Ezekiel 14:4-10.)

“And out of weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; And they that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded: For this promise, of which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of thy loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise. And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father (2 Ne 2:24-29).

Even as Joseph was the means of deliverance for his people (a temporal salvation during a time of famine), so our modern Joseph was the means of deliverance for the people of our day from the long period of spiritual famine, at which time judgment was again returned to

the saints.

“And he shall be like unto me; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his

...The Book of Mormon... identifies the Seer as being Joseph Smith, who was the son of Joseph, his father, and who also was the namesake and descendant of Joseph of Egypt through Ephraim.

hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation... (2 Ne 2:30).

Joseph of Egypt declares his confidence in the certainty of God’s promises to him, both in regard to his seed and that of the work of Moses. That Moses was given power in a rod and in writing, but as for his tongue, God sent a spokesman for him in the person of Aaron his brother, for God had not made him mighty in speaking.

“Yea, thus prophesied Joseph, I am sure of this thing, even as I am sure of the promise of Moses: for the Lord hath said unto me, I will preserve thy seed for ever. And the Lord hath said, I will raise up a

Moses; and I will give power unto him in a rod; And I will give judgment unto him in writing. Yet I will not loose his tongue, that he shall speak much: for I will not make him mighty in speaking. But I will write unto him my law, by the finger of mine own hand; and I will make a spokesman for him” (2 Ne 2:31-35).

Beside the promise of the coming of Moses, the Lord also made another promise, that of the seed of Joseph He would raise up one (a Seer) unto his seed and make for him a spokesman, and he should write the writings of the seed of Joseph, unto the seed of Joseph, and the spokesman of Joseph’s seed should declare it. It shall be as one crying from the dust (see Isaiah 29). And this because of the faith of the Nephites before them. These words Lehi expounds to his son Joseph, which is according to the prophesy of Joseph, his forefather. *(I originally thought this spokesman had to be Oliver Cowdery since he was the one who wrote most of the Book of Mormon manuscript for Joseph, and since he also preached the first sermon, and carried out the first missionary attempt to the Lamanites. However, nine months after the church was officially organized, Sydney Rigdon supplanted Oliver. And subsequent events do not adequately fulfill the requirements of the prophecy. There is another interpretation that more completely fulfills this requirement. Mormon, himself, was the abridger and writer of*

the record we now have. The spokesman must therefore be the mighty one among the Lamanites who will come forth to declare this word among his people.)

“And the Lord said unto me also, I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins: and I will make for him a spokesman. And I, behold, I will give unto him, that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins, unto the fruit of thy loins; and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it. And the words which he shall write, shall be the words which are expedient in my wisdom should go forth unto the fruit of thy loins. And it shall be as if the fruit of thy loins had cried unto them from the dust; for I know their faith. And they shall cry from the dust; yea, even repentance unto their brethren, even after many generations have gone by them. And it shall come to pass that their cry shall go, even according to the simplicity of their words. Because of their faith, their words shall proceed forth out of my mouth unto their brethren, who are the fruit of thy loins; And the weakness of their words will I make strong in their faith, unto the remembering of my covenant which I made unto thy fathers. And now, behold, my son Joseph, after this manner did my father of old prophesy (2 Ne 2:36-44).

Because of these things, the seed of Lehi's little son Jo-

seph would not be destroyed, for they will hearken to the words of the book, and among them one would rise up who shall do

The mighty one among the Lamanites will be a descendant of Lehi's Joseph of the seed of Manasseh.

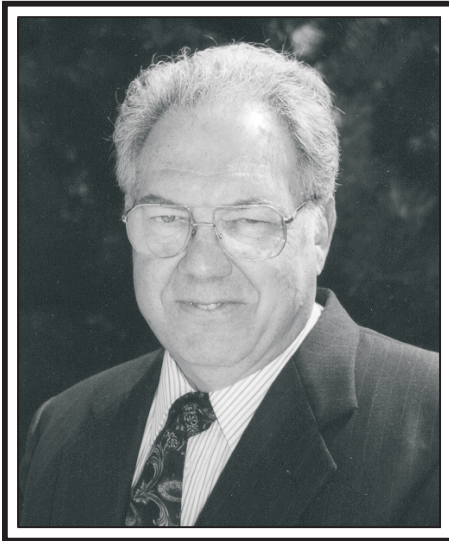
much good, being an instrument in the hands of God to work mighty wonders in bringing to pass much restoration to the house of Israel. *(This mighty one among the Lamanites will hearken to the words of the Book, which was brought forth by the Seer. That book is the Book of Mormon, and identifies the Seer as being Joseph Smith, who was the son of Joseph, his father, and who also was the namesake and descendant of Joseph of Egypt through Ephraim. The mighty one among the Lamanites will be a descendant of Lehi's Joseph of the seed of Manasseh.)*

“Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art blessed: for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall raise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an in-

strument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith. To work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren. And now, blessed art thou, Joseph. Behold, thou are little; wherefore, hearken unto the words of thy brother Nephi, and it shall be done unto thee, even according to the words which I have spoken” (2 Ne 2:45-49).

THE GIFT AND SPIRIT OF REVELATION

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED FOR THE 2002 AUGUST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BY APOSTLE ROLAND SARRATT



By Apostle Roland Sarratt

OVERCOMING THE STIGMAS OF FALSE TEACHINGS

As stated before, there are certain stigmas that are attached to some of the teachings and practices of the early church which are hard for us to overcome. One of those is the word *prophet*. We have to admit

PART #4

that to some of us it can trigger a defensiveness against the innovative office of *ordained prophet*. For our own good we must overcome our attitude to automatically reject anything purporting to be of God because it comes through one who appears to be gifted as a prophet. Prophets have been raised up by God from the beginning of time; why not now?

The word *revelation* immediately brings to mind the term *latter-day revelation*, which, in turn, may have a connotation of *false revelation*. If this be the case we should ask ourselves, Are we going to let the ever dreaded fear of false revelation dissuade us from being receptive to a revelation delivered through one of God's servants? Is it safer to off-hand reject a purported revelation or proph-

Are we going to let the ever dreaded fear of false revelation dissuade us from being receptive to a revelation delivered through one of God's servants?

ecy than to be willing to receive it? Is it more likely to be false than true? Do we have more reason to reject it than to believe it?

The biggest question: Is it more wrong to believe a purported revelation or prophecy than to disbelieve it? The simple truth is that if we believe a false revelation or prophecy we

can be deceived. On the other hand, if we disbelieve a true revelation or prophecy we also can be deceived.

How do we know if a purported revelation or prophecy delivered to the church is true or not? First of all, there must be two or three witnesses (see Mat. 18:16; 1 Cor. 13:1; 2 Nephi 8:5,6; Ether 2:3). For there to be witnesses there must be those who are receptive to revelation and prophecy. If no one other than the person who is prompted to deliver a revelation is receptive there will be no witnesses, even if that person has received a divine message for the people. It is not likely that such a situation would exist because the Lord always provides His witnesses. The point is that there should always be more than just one person who is in tune with the Spirit of God to receive divine revelation for the church. Whether or not we all will receive the same evidence that a revelation is true will depend upon our united faith in the Lord.

SCRIPTURES EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO BE BELIEVING

The great bulk of scriptures tells us plainly that we are to be a believing people. Let us hear from Mormon on the subject:

“Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with

fear and trembling before him” Mormon 4:93.

We have the promise from the Lord that He will confirm or prove all His words to those who believe in His name.

Just prior to making this statement, Mormon quoted the words of Christ which gives us a more full understanding of believing:

“For behold, thus saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God unto his disciples who should tarry; yea, and also to all his disciples, in the hearing of the multitude, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover; And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth” Mormon 4:85-88.

We have the promise from the Lord that He will confirm or prove all His words to those who believe in His name. We can be assured that the opposite is true: He will give us the discernment to know if a revelation is not true. So how can we be deceived if the Lord has given us this great promise? We can only be deceived by our lack of faith in Him and our unwillingness to obey him. As already explained, we must have the spirit of revelation and prophecy to discern whether a revelation or prophecy is true or not true. Also, we have been told that it is our individual responsibility to seek that spirit.

“TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY”

Isaiah, one of the greatest prophets raised up by the Lord, wrote these words, which are frequently quoted by the ministers of this church:

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?

for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness” Isa.8:16-22.

Isaiah was gifted in giving prophecies which appealed to the Jews, and yet the Jews didn't fully understand them. The Christian Gentiles have also favored the many prophecies of the Bible, but have often stumbled in their understanding. This great mystery can only be defined as a marvelous work and a wonder as described in Isaiah 29:14:

“Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

The law and the testimony, the word of God as we have it today, is that which we use as our standard of truth. The Church of Christ has made this qualification concerning revelation:

“Resolved that this Church of Christ accept nothing purporting

to be a revelation from God, past, present or future, as a revelation from God, save that which is in harmony with both the Bible and

If we use our natural human intellect to ascertain the truth we are apt to be misled.

the Book of Mormon. Be it further resolved that if there be any ruling, understanding, or resolution conflicting herewith, that it be hereby rescinded” *Conference action of October 6, 1925.*

Not to diminish the importance of this standard, we have to admit that we too are subject to stumble in our understanding at times, even when we do our best in comparing modern revelations and manifestations to the Bible and Book of Mormon. If we use our natural human intellect to ascertain the truth we are apt to be misled. If we are granted the miracle of receiving knowledge through the Holy Spirit, as did Peter (Mat. 16:16,17), we have the surety of the truth, which is beyond our normal ability to understand it. The Lord is no respecter of persons and will grant this special favor to any one of us and to all of us if we earnestly seek for it.

COLE'S VISION DESCRIBES THE CHURCH TODAY

At this point the purpose of this discourse is obvious. Personally I feel the great need for an increase of spiritual gifts in the church, which would open the channel of direct revelation from God to the church that this people might receive warnings and instructions pertinent to our time and to our present situation. There have been some inspirational manifestations, dreams, visions, etc., given in modern times which have brought some enlightenment. I would like to refer to a special vision given to Elder Geo. D. Cole about 1870. This vision more perfectly describes the uniqueness of the Church of Christ as it has survived the trial of retaining its special calling and purpose in these last days.

Positioned on a rock high up in the air Brother Cole was able to see the Temple Lot and the surrounding area. He saw a tree stump with a small branch growing out of it on the lot which represented the Church of Christ. He also saw the top of the tree, which was lying north of the lot. It was mostly dead, but there were some live twigs which were to be gathered out by the elders of Israel.

The tree had to be removed because it had become defective. Part of that defect was in the stump and visible to the members of the church. Brother Cole gives this account of what he saw:

“Notwithstanding it was only about or looked to be two and a half feet across the top of the stump, there was quite a number

The perfection of the membership can only be through obedience to the word of God as applied by the Spirit of God.

of people on top of it moving around, and I knew, or seem to know the most of them. There was some engaged in joking, treating lightly their surroundings and as they would near that affected place in the stump they would raise an axe to strike in it in their light minded career, but just as they would start to let fall the axe something would hinder or stop them, and that voice said to me that the Lord would not let them. I was impressed again that if the Lord didn't hinder them they would destroy it, also” *Outline History, page 131.*

The seeming need to remove the defects from the church has arisen repeatedly over the years. In our sense of righteousness we are caused to want to remove the imperfections which seem obvious to us. Yet we know that we ourselves

are imperfect, and therefore incapable of making the necessary corrections in the church. Those who have attempted to swing the axe at what they have deemed to be false teachings have been prevented from doing so by the Lord. If they were allowed to do so they would destroy the very structure of the church as it was divinely established.

THE CHURCH WILL BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH

There is only one way that the affected place in the tree stump can be removed without destroying the small branch growing out of it. Paul describes it in these words:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” Eph. 5:25-27.

Thus we find that perfection of the church requires the perfection of the individual members of the church. The perfection of the membership can only be through obedience to the word of God as applied by the Spirit of God. It is my hope and prayer that we as a people will open our hearts and minds, whereby we will favorably re-

spond to the Lord as He sanctifies and cleanses us through His word, that we as a church will be presentable to Him, holy without blemish.

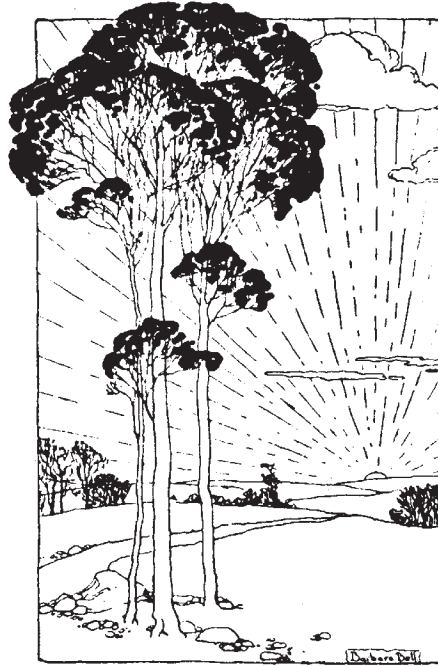
A BRAVE AND LONG-SUFFERING WOMAN

I never thought much about my bravery. I thought that the suffering just came to me, but the power of the Savior Jesus Christ sustained me and allowed me to be brave.

Three years ago one of my children fell from a very high wall. He, Arolfi, was unconscious for perhaps 3 to 5 hours. I took him to the hospital but all the while I had been praying that the Savior would wake up my child. Moments later Arolfi hollered very loud; Mommy, Mommy, I need some juice! My sister, who was with me, rushed to pick him up saying, "There is no other Savior, the only Savior is Jesus Christ who can save people!" Shortly the doctor came, and I told him I was taking Arolfi home. Arolfi began to show signs that something was wrong as a result of the concussion. He did not have peripheral vision and he seemed unable to move his head. My father played ball with Arolfi, and one day he noticed that my son was beginning to move his head a little. Three days later I heard Pastor praying for other people. Soon Bro. John Gill arrived at our home and prayed for Arolfi. After his prayer my father took Arolfi out in the yard to play ball. He threw the ball up in the air and Arolfi raised his head to follow the ball. My father did this three times to be sure; Arolfi was really able to function normally. Then my father exclaimed, "I give thanks to God, the child is well, I gave thanks to God with all my heart because my child is healthy again."

I asked the Lord, "What can I give you?" "With what can I repay you?" The only thing I have to give is my heart. Some days later Arolfi came to me saying, "Momma, there's nothing wrong with me." I can only thank God for all that He has done.

In 2001 I was working for Claudia Lopez and Mr. Gregorio Mendez. I love them and their three children Yanina, Bevemin, Robertito. On March the 20th of that year I requested permission to go to the Dr. because I had become very sick. I went to the Dr. and he told me I had heart & lung problems and a very severe respiratory infection. He prescribed 6 pints of blood and told me I must go to the University Hospital. My relatives were all crying



PATHLIGHTS

and praying for me because they were afraid I would die. During the second week of my hospital stay the Dr. examined me again. The Dr. told me I had anemia. I asked again "What is causing my problem?" My Dr. hugged me and said you need a heart operation, and fluid removed from your lungs, but I was too weak for them to operate. I cried and said "No God! I have 5 children what am I going to do Lord. If I die who will care for my children?" My roommate, Maria (Tita) del Carmen tried to console me. She also had lung problems. She was crying and said, "Monchita, God is with us! Remember we have been asking God to heal us." She encouraged me to pray again. So in tears I told the Lord, I am in Your hands; no one can turn me from You, because You are always there in times of trial. Three days later I was moved to another room and the following Thursday Nana came to visit me. Nana hugged me and her presence cheered me up a lot.

I found Tita, the young woman I shared the first room with, because I wanted to pray with her. I heard a voice, which said, "I sent

you comfort today," so I thanked God that Nana had come by to tell me she loved me. While I was still praying the Dr. came in saying to me, "Ramona don't cry any more! Because you no longer need a heart operation." "God is great! He has given you more days. Don't be afraid because the Lord loves you." The RN also came in the room and I thanked God before all of them and asked that He bless my friends here in the hospital.

The first of April my mother came with my sister to visit me. Mother told me that all my church family were praying for me, that I would soon return home. I fell asleep that night and in my sleep I saw my children crying for me and asking God to let me return home to them. I felt a hand touch my head consoling me and I opened my eyes but saw no one. Everyone around me was asleep, it was about 3 am. I then looked up and saw the Savior extending His arms towards me. Rays of light surrounded Him and His eyes were like rainbows. I looked away only a brief moment and when I looked back He was gone. I cried and thanked the Lord that he had been with me through these desperate days.

The following day the doctor discharged me from the hospital. My sister took me to her home to recuperate. My brothers and sisters of the church came there to visit and pray with me. One of my brothers said "you are going to be healed God has ordained it." And I told him the Lord has already healed me, but I'm tired of being in bed day and night and I worry about my five children. I finally got to return home and to my children. Each of them thanked God for my return. "God truly loves us!" I told them. My brothers and sisters I have truly been blessed and yet I stand in need of spiritual and material help. God Bless you all.

*Your Sister in Christ,
Ramona (Monchita) Magdalena
Zepeda*

*Translated by Nanette Smith and
edited by Jim Case*

GOD'S PERFECT WILL

Friday (11/14/03) evening I had stayed up late and was working on some different things that I was behind on and about 11:30 p.m. I decided it was time to go to bed. As I lay there the Lord began to talk to me and He told me something that I feel I should share. It is below.

*Thanks and God bless,
Ronnie Gill, Honduras*

Contentment / Contentamiento

"Contentment isn't living within what you think are your basic needs or wants, but rather, finding that perfect will of God and living within it" Ronnie Gill.

"Contentamiento no es vivir adentro lo que usted piensa son sus necesidades o deseos. Pero mas bien buscando aquel perfecto deseo de Dios, y vivir adentro de ella" Ronnie Gill.

For some that means giving up some thing or things that they may have worked hard to produce, or purchase. They must then trust in God that they are unnecessary for His perfect will in the plan for their life. Like the rich young ruler, the plan, that perfect plan, that God had for him in his life didn't include his earthly possessions, so he was asked to get rid of them, sell them and give them to the poor. Doing this would have brought him into the perfect will of God, and then he would only have had to be content. Yet he couldn't see past what he felt were basic needs and wants for survival (Matthew 19:16-30).

Por algunos esta significa dejar alguna cosa o cosas que tal vez trabajo duramente para producir o comprar. Y después confiando en Dios que aquella cosa no era necesaria para cumplir el perfecto deseo de Dios y su plan para nuestra vida. Por ejemplo el joven rico, el plan, el perfecto plan de Dios para la vida del, no incluyo sus posesiones,

entonces Dios pidió que él venderlas y darlas al pobre. Pero el no pudo ver mas allá de sus bienes, que él pensaba era muy necesario para sobre vivir.

If we give our all to God, we will always have enough to fulfill our purpose in the perfect will of God.

Si damos nuestro todo a Dios, siempre vamos a tener lo suficiente para cumplir con nuestro deberes en el perfecto plan de Dios.

On the other hand, discontentment mixed with disbelief are the holds that the Devil has over us. When we are constantly looking at our needs and the lack that we have, we give him control in our lives. We can see that in every society there are levels, these levels are to produce discontentment. (In the perfect will of God there are no levels, only perfection.) When we give in and live within the framework of these levels we are granting power to the Devil. Why? Because there is always another level for us to reach, something we don't have, something we need, discontentment.

En la otra parte descontentamiento mezclado con incredulidad son las cosas que da poder al Diablo en nuestra vida. Cuando estamos siempre mirando nuestras necesidades y lo que faltamos, estamos dando poder ha él para controlar nuestras vidas. Podemos ver en todas sociedades que hay niveles, son estos niveles que produce descontentamiento. (En el perfecto voluntad de Dios no hay niveles, solo perfección.) Cuando vivimos en estas nivelas en nuestra sociedad estamos dando poder al Diablo. ¿Porque? Porque siempre hay otro nivel para alcanzar algo que no tenemos algo que necesitamos, descontento.

We have choices in this world, but

those choices revolve around only two things. One, contentment in the perfect will of God, or two, discontentment and imperfection in our selves.

Tenemos elección en esta vida pero aquella elección revuelva alrededor de dos cosas. Uno, contentamiento adentro el perfecto voluntad de Dios, o dos, descontentamiento y imperfección adentro de nosotros mismos.

We must always remember that perfection cannot be measured by what we know or see. Perfection is measured only in whether we are giving our all to God, and living in His perfect will. If we are giving our all and living in the perfect will of God then we are perfect because we are fulfilling our purpose here in the world. When we step out of that perfect will of God, we come face-to-face with imperfection, discontentment, and we are no longer fulfilling our purpose here in this life. We are giving ourselves over to the power and temptation of the Devil.

Tenemos que recordar que perfección no se puede medir con lo que nosotros conocemos o miramos. Perfección es medida en dando todo al SeZor, y viviendo adentra de su perfecto voluntad. Si nosotros estamos dando todo nuestro ser a Dios y viviendo en su perfecto voluntad, entonces somos perfectos, porque estamos cumpliendo nuestra razón de estar. Pero cuando sale de su perfecto voluntad, encontramos cara a cara con imperfección, descontentamiento y no estamos cumpliendo nuestra razón de estar. Estamos cayendo en poder y tentación del Diablo.

I like the life example of Christ. He gave up everything, lived as a pauper, even giving up His life for us. And His most powerful words, do you know them? They were not

when He healed the sick or walked on water or raised the dead or forgave the sinner. Although these are mighty works these were not the greatest that Christ said. We see while He was in the garden and said those simple words, "But Not My Will Be Done, But Thine." That perfect contentment in the perfect will of God. Perfection (Matthew 26:36-39).

Me gusta la viva ejemplo de Cristo. Él dio todo para nosotros, viviendo como un pobre, y hasta dando su vida. ¿Y sus más poderosos palabras, sabe cuales son? No era cuando Él sanaba el enfermo ni cuando Él caminaba en el agua ni cuando Él levantaba el muerto ni cuando daba perdón al pecador. Si estas son grandes y importantes obras. Pero podemos ver el momento cuando Él estaba en el huerto y dijo estos tan simple palabras, "No mi voluntad, pero su voluntad." Perfecta contentamiento adentra el perfecto voluntad de Dios. Perfección.

To know God's will in our lives we must do as the rich young ruler did; we must come unto the Lord and ask, "What do I need to be saved?" And then the second question, "What do I need to be perfect in You?" Yet we must ask as the Apostle James taught, asking with a true desire to know God's will, and not just as a passing thought. Then once known, we must be willing to live within His perfect will.

Para conocer la voluntad de Dios en nuestra vida, tenemos que hacer como el joven rico, tenemos que venir hacia a Dios y preguntar, ¿Qué necesito para ser salvo? Y la Segunda pregunta, ¿Qué necesito para ser perfecto adentro de Él? Pero tenemos que pedir tal como el Apostol Santiago enseño, pidiendo con verdadero intento para conocer la voluntad de Dios y no solo para pedir. Y cuando conocemos la voluntad de Dios, tenemos que ser dispuesto para vivir dentro de su perfecta voluntad.

I would ask you just for a moment, say a Peter walking on water moment. If you can!

Quiero pedir un momento de usted, por decir un momento de Pedro caminando en la agua. Si puedes.

STOP! JUST STOP!
¡PARACE! ¡SIEMPRE PARACE!

Look around you, where you are, who you are, what you are, your life. Perhaps you don't know or perhaps you are unable to know, but if you can, look at that perfect will of God for you in your life. ARE YOU THERE?

If you don't know that perfect will of God for your life, that's okay. Now make it your first and foremost desire to know what it is God would have of you. Don't expect Him to answer with big stage effects, because the most common response is more like a butterfly. Do what ever is necessary for you to know. Knowledge brings peace and comfort; ignorance brings fear and discomfort. Remember, true contentment mixed with true belief can only bring you closer to that perfect will of God. Yet ignorance and fear will only lead you away.

Mirar alrededor de usted, donde esta, quien es, que eres, su vida. Tal vez usted no conoce o tal vez usted no puede conocer, pero si usted puede mirar adentro de la perfecta voluntad de Dios para su vida. ESTAS ALLA.

Si usted no conoce la voluntad de Dios para su vida esta bien. Ahora hacerla lo más importante desello de su vida, conocer la voluntad de Dios para su vida. No espera que él va a hacer un gran espectáculo para hablar con usted porque la respuesta más común de Dios es como una mariposa, suave. Hacer todo lo que usted necesita para descubrir para conocer. Sabiduría atraía paz y confortación. Ignorancia atraía miedo y dis-comfortación. Recuerdo que verdadera contentamiento mezclada con verdadero creencia ayuda a uno en acercarse a la perfecta voluntad de Dios. E ignorancia y miedo se lleva uno aparte de Dios.

I never heard of a true believer in God who starved to death with his family. You may say that is because he used wisdom and watched out for his family, *he was responsible*; but then you are also saying that we can do something, *when in reality we can do nothing*. We are lower than the dust of the earth.

Yo nunca he escuchado sobre un caso cuando un verdadero creyente en Dios con

su familia murió por hambre. Puedes decir que el uso sabiduría y cuido su familia o decir que él era responsable, pero para decir esto es para decir que nosotros tenemos algún poder, cuando en verdad nosotros no podemos hacer nada. Somos mas bajo que el polvo.

That breath you just took, who gave it to you? Did you give it to yourself? No! Nor do I believe that you have the ability to stop that breath.

¿La soplada de aire que a cave de tomar, quien lo dio? ¿Usted mismo? ¡No! Ni creo que usted tiene la poder para no tomar aquel soplada de aire.

Now take that breath and also everything around you and use them to fulfill God's perfect plan in your life.

Ahora toma de Nuevo aquel soplada de aire y también todo lo que usted tienes alrededor de usted y usarlos para cumplir el perfecta voluntad de Dios en su vida.

And don't ever think just because you took a breath that the next one is a given.

Remember you didn't will that breath into existence.

It was God's will.

You are only fulfilling it.

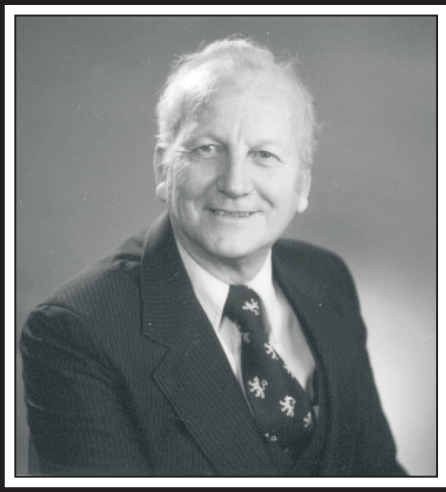
Y no pienses solo porque has tomado un soplo de aire que el siguiente es garantizado.

Recuerdo no era usted que Hizo aquel soplo de aire.

Era la voluntad de Dios.

Usted solo esta cumpliendo la voluntad de Dios.

Pondering the Words of JESUS CHRIST



By Apostle William A. Sheldon

Item 15: Reconciliation With An Earthly Adversary - or Prison??

Mat 5:25, 26 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing (see Lk 12:58, 59).

3 Ne 5:73-75 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time he shall get thee, and thou shalt be cast into prison. Verily, verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the uttermost senine. And while ye are in prison, can ye pay even one senine? Verily, ver-

(Quotations are from the King James Authorized Edition of the Bible and from the 1908 RLDS Edition of the Book of Mormon; same chapters/verses as Independence Edition.)

ily I say unto you, Nay.

The Book of Mormon text reveals that the sin of enmity with our fellow man is no light matter. We are to follow after peace with all mankind if it is possible, a peace based on righteousness. We are not accountable if the other person(s) will not accede to such overture.

This also touches firmly on the sin of contention, and especially of contending over the word of God, which is strictly prohibited.

3 Ne. 5:29-31 And there shall be no disputations among you, as there hath hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there hath hitherto been; For verily, verily I say unto you, He that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger one with another; Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.

In a broader sense, our initial texts above give the words of Jesus as using a civil court procedure to illustrate a greater spiritual judg-

ment by God, applicable to the general consequences of deliberate sin; not only of the sin of angry disputation.

If one is "cast into prison" (God's prison; hell; outer darkness), of course there is no way that he can truly pay for his sin; he must suffer the penalty. However, **THERE IS ONE WHO WILL HAVE PAID THE PRICE** (shall we say - paid the bail?) who is Jesus Christ, and who will eventually do so upon the basis of genuine sorrow for the sin and true repentance. He has the key to the prison house, and hell shall finally be opened to those who are incarcerated (see Rev. 20: 13), for even hell shall deliver up the dead which are there - those who have not sinned against the Holy Ghost.

Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Mat. 12: 31, 32 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy

Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Isa 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound....*

Freedom from the bonds of hell was most remarkably revealed in Alma's lifetime experience, having so greatly sinned in his persecution of the saints of his time. The Lord foreknew that he would be a marvelous instrument in his hands after he had been humbled; so He caused Alma to be stricken "with the pains of hell...a damned soul...in the gall of bitterness...encircled about by the everlasting chains of death" (see Al. 17:8-15). But then, he remembered his father speaking of Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of mankind, and he cried unto Jesus for mercy. It was then, in abject humility, that he could no longer remember his pains or the memory of his sins (he repented); and it was then that his soul was filled with the light of Christ. He was delivered, and became a new man in Christ (ibid., vs. 16-20).

Some have rightly said that Alma had not died; nevertheless, this is a prime example of the effect of unrepentant sin, of the pain to be endured in God's prison house; but also the deliverance through Christ when He has seen sufficient repentance, having suffered whatever "stripes" (see Luke 12:47-48) were in accord with divine justice.

Item 16: The Grievous Sin Of Adultery

Mat 5:27, 28, 31-32 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.... It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

3 Ne 5:76-80 *Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart. Behold, I give you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart; for it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell. It hath been written, that whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. Verily, verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whoso shall marry her who is divorced, committeth adultery.*

These are plain, straight-forward commandments, and are generally to be accepted. However, there does appear to be some extension or deviation from the above. Certainly, a bonafide case of adultery (one being perfectly innocent and having given no real cause to the spouse to break his covenant), is sufficient to free the innocent one for re-marriage. Another breach of the covenant is suggested by Apostle Paul as a rea-

son for freedom, and no doubt is based upon a statement of Jesus:

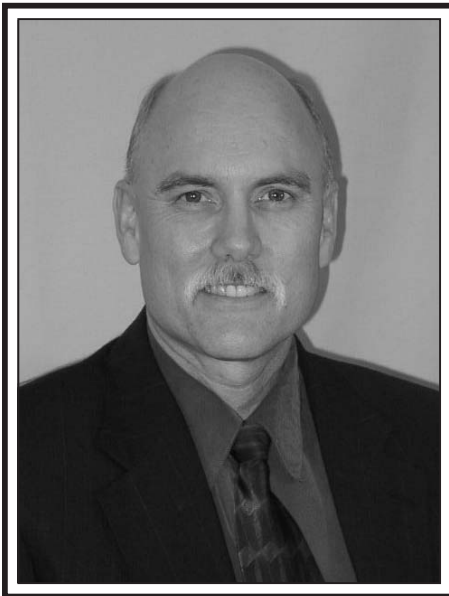
Matt. 18: 18 [Jesus]...*But if he (a transgressor/w.a.s) neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (this infers a casting from the Church body/w.a.s.)*

2 Cor 6:15 [Paul] *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (or, heathen/w.a.s.)?*

1 Tim. 5:8 [Paul] *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

Putting these statements of Jesus and Paul together would suggest freedom from a marriage covenant for a woman whose husband would not support her. If one is freed from the marriage covenant, either by death, adultery, or by a deliberate temporal unsupport, it would seem that person should be free to re-marry if desired. However, such allowance within the Church through temporal unsupport should be in a counseling with those of the priesthood if possible, after thorough examination of its validity.

Articles of Faith & Practice



By Elder Gordon McCann

Article #13

Jesus was about 30 years of age when he began His ministry (Luke 3:23), but His ministry did not begin until after He:

Was baptized with water.

Received the Holy Ghost as it descended upon him in the form of a dove, along with the assuring voice of His Fa-

ther, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased."

Nephi made the following statement concerning the example that Jesus Christ would leave for mankind:

"It sheweth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou me" (2 Nephi 13:11-12).

After fasting for forty days in the wilderness, where He was subjected to Satan's temptations, Jesus then leaves Nazareth "in the power of the Spirit" and comes to live in Capernaum in Galilee at the seacoast. It was along the sea coast of Galilee that Jesus calls four fishermen into His ministry after the holy order of God.

Article #13

We believe in the same church organization as existed in the time of Christ and His Apostles. The highest office in the church is that of an apostle, of whom there are twelve, who constitute special witnesses for Jesus Christ. They have the missionary supervision and the general watchcare of all of the churches.

Eventually He calls eight more who would become a

core group of twelve men whom He named apostles, and later would call others into His ministry (Luke 10:1). When Jesus appeared unto His eleven apostles after His resurrection He gives them a commandment:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

The Apostle Paul provides a mental picture for his readers by using an analogy comparing a complete physical body with a fully functional spiritual body of Christ's church on earth. All of the individual members comprising the body of Christ would have a work to perform, but differing one from another.

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of

tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:27-28).

Contrary to popular secular Christian beliefs and practices, apostles, as established by Jesus Christ in the early church and later restored on earth in these last days, would continually be at the head of His church. As the Apostle Paul pointed out, if one of the members of the body would be missing, the body would not be whole. There is plain evidence of the continuance of the calling of apostles as the Spirit of the Lord directed when there were less than twelve due to death or permanent separation. For example, when Matthias replaced Judas (Acts 1:26); Barnabas and Saul replaced James (brother of John) and another apostle not mentioned in the text (Acts 12:2; 13:2-3; 14:14).

When Jesus appeared unto the seed of Joseph in the Americas after His resurrection, He chose twelve men (3 Nephi 9:4) and set them apart to be at the head of the body of Christ (they being isolated from the body in Jerusalem). It is recorded in Moroni 2:2 that Jesus gave these twelve men the author-

ity to give the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then said to them “for thus do mine apostles.” It is also recorded in 4 Nephi 1:16 that “there were other disciples ordained in their stead,” referring to a continuation of having twelve at the head of the Church of Christ.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...” (Ephesians 4:13).

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