

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

VOLUME 81

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI—APRIL 2004

NUMBER 4

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

—1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18—

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ZION'S ADVOCATE is the official publication of the Church of Christ, with headquarters on the Temple Lot, 200 S. River Blvd., P.O. Box 472, Independence, Missouri 64051-0472. Telephone (816) 833-3995 or (816) 833-3914. The Church of Christ web site is: www.churchofchrist-tl.org.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Church of Christ members' subscriptions are paid from general Church funds, but donations are requested (suggested: \$4.00 each year). In bundles of 12 or more for missionary purposes the rate is \$2.00.

Non-member rates: \$4.00 per year; foreign orders add 50¢.

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Format of submitted material: Please type all submissions (if possible), on one side of the paper only. Please avoid overuse of underlining, ALL-CAPS and *italics*. The most important thing, though, is to send the material—the staff can arrange for typing or otherwise preparing anything you send.

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STATUS OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES

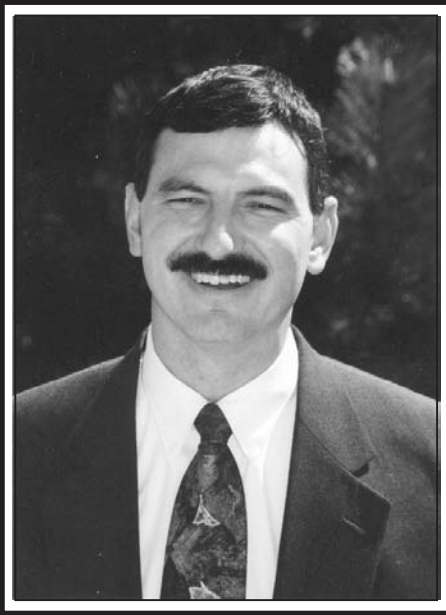
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

GOD'S PLAN

for Success in Changing Times



By Apostle Joel Yates

In mid-January one of the ministers in the Phoenix local preached a sermon on change. Sitting in the congregation that day, I knew that sermon was for me. I went away from church encouraged and re-focused on God's plan in my life, realizing how vital change is to accomplish God's purposes in us.

For some time I had been aware I needed a change in my job, yet wondered if it was just my desire or if God was moving my heart to strive for this change. I felt as if I had been given an answer, and I was

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given peace in my decision to take the next promotional exam. The next week, I was given an opportunity to attend a seminar and a "Change in the Fire Service Symposium," that only had a limited number of attendees. For some reason my name was picked to go. I discovered once again God knew I needed to go and listen. I realized to make the transition from being a crew member to a supervisor I needed to be able to see The Big Picture of how our fire department organization works and what my part in it would be.

I was not disappointed in the information I received, yet found myself, as I often do, wondering about the things pertaining to the organization of Christ's Kingdom on earth. I learned what was needed for the success of our department, and I was filled with thoughts on what is necessary for the Church to have success in a changing world. I felt the Spirit of God rest upon me several times during those meetings, and I was filled with thoughts for a sermon. I could see how

Everything has been placed in the Church that is needed to make us successful in accomplishing God's goal for us and His purposes in the Church.

God was using this to awaken me to a sense of my responsibility in His Kingdom. I have been content with poor results and not excited about the challenges we face to help bring about changes needed for success in the Lord's purposes and design for His Church.

My desire is to take you on a journey and share with you the vision of the Lord for His Church, as it would look if it were working according to its perfect design. In order to do this I must ask that we consider several questions. What is the Lord's goal and purpose for mankind—individually and collectively? If we do not know His goal, we cannot understand His design and its purpose. The an-

swer to this question is found in John 3:16-17 in the purpose of God sending His Son into the world.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

God’s goal is the salvation of our souls, and the souls of all men and women that will come out of the world to Him. Knowing His goal is vital to determining whether or not we are having success or failing in our purpose and mission as a Church. This, then, brings us to the next question. If salvation is God’s goal for mankind, what is the purpose and mission of the church organization? Certainly the purpose and mission of the church organization is to support the functions and supply the tools needed to call the souls of men to repentance and the plan of salvation. What is it designed to do? Everything has been placed in the Church that is needed to make us successful in accomplishing God’s goal for us and His purposes in the Church.

In order to accomplish God’s purposes in the world for the children of men, the Church needs to be desirable, and a beacon in a dark world. The Lord reminded us of this when He preached the Sermon on the Mount and said,

“Ye are the light of the world.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”
Matthew 5:14-16.

God’s goal is the salvation of our souls, and the souls of all men and women that will come out of the world to Him.

Consider the vision of Christ for His Church and place the vision in your own mind. I know in order for an organization to succeed each part of the organization must have a common vision and goal.

The scriptures show us the vision of the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, and tell us the goal and end result that He is working toward. Let’s consider three scriptures that declare the vision and prophesy that declare the outcome of the Lord’s Church.

Ephesians 5:25-27: *“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.”

I Nephi 3:226-231: *“And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; Nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; And their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw. And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together in multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; And they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”*

Revelation 19:7-8: *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”*

What do you see in these scriptures? Can you see the great plan of God for His glorious church—His precious bride? Do you see the great vision and desire of God toward us? I pray your minds are awakened to the great purpose and desire of God towards His

Church. I pray each of us will allow this vision of Christ to become our own so we might be willing to make the changes necessary to become the glorious church, armed with righteousness, prepared for His return to claim us as His own bride. If we will allow this to become our vision, we will then be able to understand the need for changes in our personal lives and in our church collectively.

How will God accomplish this vision? What does the church organization look like? How does it work? The Word of God answers these questions for us and gives a view of how all the moving parts are supposed to work to accomplish the vision of Christ for His church.

I Corinthians 12:12-26: *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And*

the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour;

God has placed each of us in the body where He thought we would do the most good.

and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

Christ has compared the church to a body. This example given us of God shows what great wisdom He possesses. Those of us capable of reasoning and understanding know a great deal about the body. We know the basic functions that make it work and what hinders our bodies from performing appropriately. Using this knowledge and comparing it to spiritual things is necessary to understand how things should work in the Church and what

hinders God’s work. Consider verse eighteen. It tells us God has placed each of us in the body as it pleases Him. God has placed each of us in the body where He thought we would do the most good. There is no shame in where He placed us, because every part is important to the whole body.

The most important element needed for the body to fulfill its purpose is the love of God, every member having the same care for the others. If every function of the body is tempered in love, the body will begin to function smoothly and all parts will be able to work together no matter what force of Satan or the world is arrayed against it. Doing things in the Love of God is the only way that we will be ready for the return of Christ. Now let us finish this chapter that tells us what God placed in the body to make it work and function according to his perfect design:

I Corinthians 12:27-31: *“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. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*

Not only did God compare the Church to a body, but He also shows us in these last few

verses that He placed different offices of the priesthood, the gifts of the Spirit, helps or things that give us relief, and a government in the church. All of these things are necessary for the body to function as it was designed, and every piece God put in the body was for the good and use of the body, not for personal glory. All of us know that our bodies are a bunch of moving parts that depend on each other to function correctly and as a unit at whatever task we are doing. Every single part must function in the manner it was designed or the entire body will suffer and may not be able to accomplish the task facing it. One part cannot do everything.

Consider how important every part of the body is to the good of the whole. If your stomach starts to growl with hunger and sends an impulse to your brain and your brain tells your arms and legs to head for the kitchen for some food and your feet, legs, etc. refuse to function, how important are those parts at that time? Every part is of great importance in our bodies and we cannot underestimate the contribution of the tiniest part, which God has designed to do a function in the body. This is also true of the body of the Church. Everyone is part and everyone has a function. We do not all have the same function, responsibility, purpose, etc., but each part is obligated to do what God has designed it to do. As an apostle I realize I cannot be all things to all people, because I was not supposed to be. But I do have a

responsibility to the body and its watch care. I must strive to faithfully take my place.

One of the great concerns I have for the church is so many of our people do not know what their function is unless they are elected to an office...

What is your function and part in the body? One of the great concerns I have for the church is so many of our people do not know what their function is unless they are elected to an office either in the General Church, Local Church, or Mission. The ministry has a great challenge to help our people find their place and take their part in the body of Christ. How do you know what your function is and what part you play? This brings me to a point and a story. We must remember what God's goal is for each of us, and what the purpose of the church is. The goal is salvation and the purpose of the church (that is us—the people) is to assist and supply the tools, support, teaching, etc., that enable our members to accomplish the goal.

The story is a true story of one of our members and one of our local congregations. The member is a young man named Chris Wallace who was a mem-

ber of the Treasure Valley Local of Idaho. I received a call one morning from the pastor and his wife telling me that Chris had fallen asleep on his way home from work the night before, hit a pole, and was killed. The next day would have been his 19th birthday. Chris was an important part of his local and had a great love for the Lord. The Lord had changed his life. He was a faithful witness to his coworkers and those he talked with. He was a light for Christ. I was dazed at the news of his death and wanted to question the Lord concerning why He took him home. In the moment of my grief, the Spirit of the Lord made me realize that what we deemed a tragedy was actually a testimony of hope and an example of the body of Christ working to perfection. I was reminded of the scripture, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" Romans 8:28. This scripture caused me to consider all God had done to prepare Chris for salvation and how the body of Christ, the church, had worked together—each one doing their part so the great goal of God for Chris was fulfilled and he was able to rejoice in the presence of God. You see, our brothers and sisters in the Treasure Valley Local played a large role in helping Chris prepare his life to live eternally with the Lord.

I want to give you a very short version of how it all worked. Chris was the great-nephew of Roy and Mary

Coon, the pastor and his wife. While visiting with them one day, Sister Mary invited him to attend church with them. Somewhere in all this the Lord, by His Spirit, had called out to this young man and he accepted the invitation and started attending the Church of Christ. Once he started attending church, he was exposed to another brother who was teaching him Sunday school lessons, and the word of God began to work upon him. At the same time he was also able to hear his pastor preach the word of God, and listen to the prayers and testimonies of the people of the congregation, each one of them working for his good. The love and concern of our brothers and sisters for the Lord and for Christ called out to his heart and the day came he had an experience and desired baptism because he wanted a covenant relationship with the Lord. After baptism he continued to be fed by the sermons and different Sunday school teachers. He continued to fellowship with his brothers and sisters there, and his life began to expand in the Lord. He faced many trials and troubles, just like each of us do, but with the help of the Lord and the continued support and fellowship of the local church, he was able to prevail in the Lord. Each one of the brothers and sisters had an impact on his life for good. It would be impossible to separate everyone's contribution and make even one part less than another, because every part was needed to prepare him for the journey home, the ultimate goal

of God for each of us.

What would have happened if just one prayer that

The Lord expects us to change the things that have caused us to fail in our efforts.

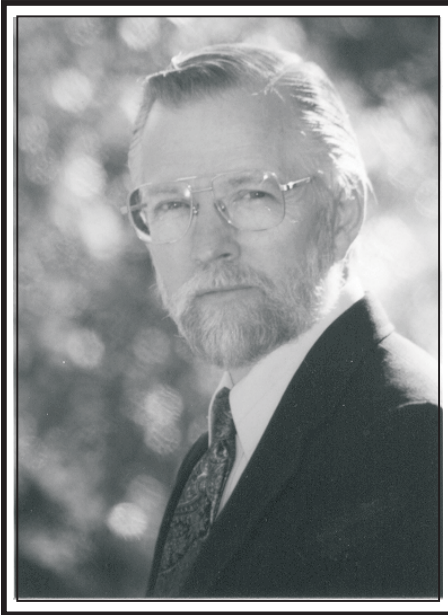
touched him had not been prayed, or one testimony that filled him with the Spirit had not been given, if one Sunday school lesson that required someone to stay up late the night before to prepare had not been given? Certainly not one of us is able to say what might have been the outcome of Christ's spiritual life if those who were given the responsibility for his spiritual care (not just ministry) had been slothful in their duty. I hope this example awakens us to the great responsibility we share in the care of the souls of men. This is not just the work of the ministry, but an effort that encompasses each member of the body. Your contribution can never be considered of any less value than others if a life has been touched for good or a soul has been inspired or strengthened toward salvation.

How do we measure success in the workings of the body of Christ? Look around your congregation and see how many success stories there are, and then, if truth is important, how many stories do you have where the body did not fulfill its pur-

pose and its mission and was not effective? Unfortunately, there are probably more of these stories than we would like to admit, and every group or local has their own list. We cannot change the past but we can learn from it. We are living in a time when the winds of change are blowing on us as a Church. The Lord expects us to change the things that have caused us to fail in our efforts. He expects us to do the things required to increase the cause of righteousness, making the body—the bride of Christ—effective and desirable to those outside and inside, with each member taking their place, doing their part and working together in love for each other and the Lord.

I learned the other day what is important for the success of any organization and I want to share these five themes for success. In order for any organization to be successful they must have five things working properly for them: Good systems (rules, procedures, principles, etc.), Integrity, Good Customer Service, Accountability, and a Risk Management Program. Every one of these aspects is important to all the others, and not one part is more important than the others. If even one of them is not being accomplished the organization of the church will not work properly and accomplish what it was designed to do. Let's take a look at each part and how it is designed to work in the body of Christ.

THE FATHER AND THE SON



By Harvey E. Seibel

Recently I had occasion to read some of the writings of the early church fathers from some volumes entitled *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. These writers were the successors of the apostles. Ignatius, for example, knew John the Beloved personally. Clement was born in 30 A.D.

Apparently the subject of the Godhead was a topic of discussion back then just as it is today. I think where the confusion arises is from the peculiarity of the language which is sometimes employed. A few verses, taken alone, would imply a one person God, especially if not understood in the context in which they were given. Many other verses suggest there is a plurality of persons. The scrip-

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tures denoting a plurality far outnumber those denoting a singularity. We know that God gives here a little and there a little, line upon line, as we read in the following scripture.

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

Therefore, we cannot base a doctrine or concept on just a single scripture alone, for no one scripture contains the whole truth of God. Each scripture is like a puzzle piece, and until we have all the pieces we cannot know the full mystery of God, or the full truth of any scriptural subject. This is why the Lord instructs us to,

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

But why does God say that precept must be upon precept, line upon line, and here a little, and there a little? It is because He expects us to apply ourselves. He expects us to study. But there is also another reason, and that is for the unbelieving and slothful. Consider:

“But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and

...We cannot base a doctrine or concept on just a single scripture alone, for no one scripture contains the whole truth of God.

fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken” (Isaiah 28:13).

Yet, *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter”* (Proverbs 25:2).

In regard to the study of the Godhead we really have two grand options. One is to reconcile and understand the few scriptures in light of the many. The other is to reconcile the many scriptures in light of the few. It is easier to reconcile the few with the many, much more so than the other way around. I really do not think that God contradicts Himself. His truths are revealed to the truly humble seeker of God, especially if he does not have an agenda or an idol of the heart, but rather a sincere desire to know the truth, no matter what it may be. In other words, we should not attempt to make scripture con-

form to what we want to believe, or to our personal beliefs, but rather we should conform our beliefs to the truth of the scripture, regardless of what our parents may have told us, or what we may have heard preached from the pulpit, or have been taught in Sunday School, or what we, ourselves, may want to believe. The saints of Berea,

"...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The confusion revolves around certain scriptures (few in number) found in both the Bible and Book of Mormon, though the vast majority of scripture presents no problem. The following examples will suffice.

FROM THE BIBLE (IMPLYING A SINGULARITY)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

"Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very

works' sake" (John 14:8-11).

"I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8).

FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON (IMPLYING A SINGULARITY)

"And now Abinadi said unto them, I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people; and because he dwelleth in flesh, he shall be called the Son of God: and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son; the Father because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son: and they are one God, yea, the very eternal Father of heaven and of earth; and thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged and cast out, and disowned by his people" (Mosiah 8:28-32).

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son" (Ether 1:77).

"And because of the fall of man, came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son" (Mormon 4:71).

"I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words, will not believe me, that I am; and he that will not believe me, will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father" (Ether 1:107-108).

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them, saying, Arise

and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands, and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 5:14).

These represent a few problem scriptures which are the source of the confusion in the minds of some, chiefly because they seem to be speaking in the sense of a singularity rather than of a plurality. The question, then, is if this is truly the case, why do the vast majority of scriptures express a plurality? Is there truly a contradiction?

The proper solution is to reconcile these few scriptures with the whole, rather than the reverse. Actually, when understood in their proper context there is no contradiction at all. It is only apparently so on the surface.

Before we present the solution to this enigma consider a few examples of scripture on the other side which express a plurality. There are literally hundreds of these but we will content ourselves with just a few.

FROM THE BIBLE (IMPLYING A PLURALITY)

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON?" (Hebrews 1:5).

"And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him...BUT UNTO THE SON HE SAITH, THY THRONE,

O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM. THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HATED INIQUITY; THEREFORE GOD, EVEN THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY FELLOWS...But to which of the angels; said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Hebrews 1:6, 8-9, 13).

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. THEN CAME THERE A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, I HAVE BOTH GLORIFIED IT, AND WILL GLORIFY IT AGAIN. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, this voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:27-30).

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and WE WILL COME UNTO HIM, AND MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM" (John 14:23).

"For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, THAT GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:34-36).

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST" (Acts 4:26).

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, HE GAVE ME A COMMANDMENT WHAT I SHOULD SAY, AND WHAT I SHOULD SPEAK" (John 12:49)

"Jesus saith unto her (Mary), Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER; AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD" (John 20:17).

"AND HE CAME AND TOOK THE BOOK OUT OF THE RIGHT HAND OF HIM THAT SAT UPON THE THRONE. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb" (Revelation 5:7)

THE SOLUTION

The Singularity Statements summarized: Isaiah 9:6 tells us that Christ is the mighty God, the eternal Father. In John 8:8-11 Christ told Philip that he that had seen Him had seen the Father. In John 10:30 Jesus tells us that He and His Father are one. Deuteronomy states that the Lord our God is one Lord. Lastly Isaiah 44:8 tells us that God does not know of any other God but Himself. The Book of Mormon, in various scriptures, declares that Christ is the Father and the Son, and that He is the God of the whole earth.

There is no question whatever that all of the above statements are true, but does this prove that God and Christ are one person? If we had no other scripture we might possibly be justified in so concluding. But this would not be based on all the evidence of scripture. Consider how it is that Christ is both God and Lord, as well as Father and Son.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken

unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:1-14).

A LOOK AT STEWARDSHIP

A question brought up about Article 17 of the Articles of Faith and Practice at the 2003 Conference prompted me to look into stewardship. I would like to share some of the things that touched me, in a Sunday School lesson format, to encourage all to study the topic as well.

The most common definitions for *steward* in the Bible, taken from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, are: 1) to hold a possession, 2) a male adjunct or manager, 3) to administer or manage a possession.

With these definitions in mind answer the following questions:

- 1) Who is responsible for stewardship?
- 2) What do you possess to be a steward over?
- 3) How can you manage these possessions or gifts?

To start looking at who is responsible for stewardship read the following texts: Proverbs 31:27, Ephesians 5:22-23, Genesis 1:28, and Psalm 8.

It is intriguing that a steward is a male manager, and that they were commonly hired to oversee the household operation; however, Proverbs 31:27 says that the woman is the keeper of the house. That sent me to Ephesians 5:22-23 where the husband is the head of the wife, therefore providing a male manager over the household. Does this mean the husband is solely responsible? Both Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:28 tell us that mankind has been placed over the works of God's hand. Since we are a part of God's creation it would stand to reason that everyone has something to be a steward over.

Further discussion questions:

- 1) What other scriptures come to mind in discussing the first question?
- 2) Do you think that someone like the ministry has a greater responsibility for stewardship?

To start looking at what we possess to be a steward over read the following texts: I Corinthians 12 and Matthew 25:14-30.

When thinking about what we have to be stewards over it is easy to think of food or money, but the scriptures bring up more than that. When you answered the second question did you think of land, emotions, talents, or time? *Strong's Concordance* shows several definitions, but most in Hebrew and Greek were: living things, property, ability, power, and wealth. Did you think of any of these things? Do you use them to glorify the God who gave them to you? I Corinthians 12 starts out talking about the spiritual gifts given to man by God. Starting with verse 12 Paul describes how we are all parts of the body of Christ, and the special abilities of each part is required to make a whole body. As you read into chapters 13 & 14 we are given the true key to proper stewardship of God's gifts: charity. Now let's look at the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. In the first two verses the master divides goods according to the servants abilities, tying into the idea in I Corinthians 12 that we have different talents. Verses 16-18 show how the servants put their abili-

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

ties to work, and verses 21-30 show the rewards each received. For those whose abilities benefited the master the reward was entering into the master's joy and the promise of abundance. For the one who hid his talent, it was taken away and his reward was outer darkness. The last servant reminds me of the saying "use it or lose it."

Further discussion questions:

- 1) What abilities and possessions do you have to glorify God with?
- 2) If you don't use them then what are you afraid of?
- 3) Who in your life has touched you with their abilities or talents?

To start looking at how to manage what we possess read the following texts:

Alma 16:223-225, Jacob 2:23-24, Titus 1:7-9, Mosiah 2:28-41, Genesis 41:46-57 and Luke 10:30-36.

One instruction was repeated throughout the scriptures: give to the needy. The first reading in Alma 16:223-225 starts out by telling us to "impart of your substance if ye have, to those which stand in need." Verses 224 and 225 give warnings of consequences if we fail to do this thing. I certainly do not want my prayer to be in vain, or to be viewed as dross to be cast out. Verse 225 contains the only instance I am aware of where charitable refers to giving to the needy, instead of the pure love of Christ. Jacob 2:23-24 tells us that we can obtain riches if we seek them for the purpose of doing good after we achieve "a hope in Christ." Titus 1:7-9 gives us a list of attributes needed to be a righteous steward. Although the list is assigned to a bishop I think it could be applied to anyone. Mosiah 2:28-41 starts out echoing the Alma 16 reading telling us to give to the needy in his time of need. Verse 32 is an important perspective giver by reminding us that "are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same being, even God, for all the substance which we have?" Verses 40 and 41 put the whole concept of giving where it belongs, in the heart. Let's look at two examples of men who managed possessions for the benefit of others. The first is Joseph, in Genesis 41:46-57. In the first four verses Joseph is gathering and saving during a time of plenty. In verses 55-56 we see that the storehouses were not opened until famine occurred in Egypt. Finally, in verse 57, we see that Joseph sold from the storehouse, not just gave away. Joseph saved when he could, used only when the need was real, and took steps to help people appreciate and not be wasteful by selling rather than giving away. The second is the good Samaritan. In verse 34 we see the items he packed that allowed him to take care of the injured man. In verse 35 he pays what he can and promises more if needed. The Samaritan demonstrates being prepared for the unknown and doing extra labor if needed to help someone.

Further discussion questions:

- 1) What other scriptures come to mind in discussing the third question?
- 2) Which attributes of Titus 1:7-9 can you apply to administering your substance?
- 3) Can you be a good steward and maintain wealth?
- 4) What are ways you can prepare to help someone in need?

I leave you with this saying from a church sign: "What I have God gives, what I give God multiplies."

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Here is a color page for young people to enjoy. Read the story in Luke 10:30-37.



The Good Samaritan
Luke 10

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

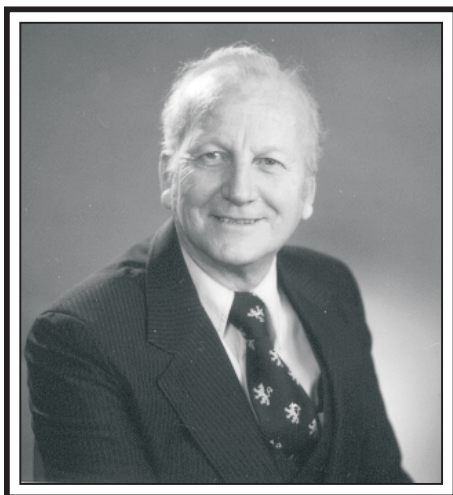
Here is a word search for older youth with words from the lesson. The words may be going up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal. Happy hunting!

N O I S S E S S O P Q R A
E E E F G E T B D O T O D
C D I J L V R E Q U A V M
N U V G H K E V I D L E I
A P P L H E A B A P E R N
T U V M I B Q U A N N S I
S R Z O C B O A B V T E S
B B O N O P Q U O S S E T
U S A M A S T E R T E R E
S T E W A R D B E G G A R

**STEWARD
NEIGHBOUR
BEGGAR
SUBSTANCE
TALENT**

**SERVANT
MASTER
ADMINISTER
POSSESSION
OVERSEER**

Pondering the Words of JESUS CHRIST



By Apostle William A. Sheldon

Item 25: Heavenly Treasures

Matt. 6:19-21 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Practically the same in 3 Ne. 5:110-112).

Treasures on earth are easily understood; but what are treasures in heaven? They are the fruit of the Spirit as found in Gal. 5:22-23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

(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.)

And in 1 Tim. 6:17-19:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The following from 2 Ne. 6:62-64 highlights the usual results of building earthly treasure:

But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich, they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures: wherefore, their treasure is their God. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.

An exception to the foregoing is found in Jacob 2:22-24:

Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. BUT BEFORE YE SEEK FOR RICHES, SEEK YE FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the in-

tent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick, and the afflicted (emphasis/ w.a.s).

Moreover, regarding riches, there was a young rich man who came to Jesus desiring the way of eternal life. He had kept all the commandments of God as stated by Jesus, but he went his way sorrowing because of unwillingness to comply with what Jesus said further:

Matt. 19:21 ...If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

This commandment to the rich man is not to be construed as a general commandment to all. It was to him because of his love of wealth. Jesus followed this up, saying:

Ibid., 23-29...Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all,

and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

With regard to a camel going "through the eye of a needle," Lamsa said that the Aramaic word for camel (which is gamla) is also the same for rope. Therefore the proper English translation should have been "rope." Even this seemed impossible to Jesus' disciples, but Jesus said that all things are possible with God, and evidently as He discerns the heart.

You will have noted here the great reward for those who have spurned the carnal things of life for those of the Spirit. This is not to say that one must reject loved ones, but rather that even they are not to be anything but secondary at best to a pure devotion to Christ and kingdom. If husband or wife, etc. demand otherwise, choose Christ.

Item 26: Singleness Of Heart

Matt. 6:22, 23 *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness (same in 3 Ne. 5:113-114).*

Here Jesus made an analogy between the human eye and the spirit within a man. Just as the body is illuminated and moved by good vision, or darkened by poor vision, functioning accordingly, so also the

spirit within moves one either toward the light of Christ or the darkness of Satan; and if toward the latter, "how great is that darkness." There needs to be developed an un-deviating focus, a mind-set, upon the light of Christ.

Deut. 6:5-7 *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Ps. 112: 5-7 *A good man ... will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

An advertisement for doughnuts was couched in language appropriate to our theme:

As you ramble on through life, brother, whatever be your goal,

Keep your eye upon the doughnut, and not upon the hole.

Item 27: Worship God, Not Mammon (The World)

Matt. 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Same in Luke 16:13 & 3 Ne. 5:115).*

Ancient Israel attempted to serve God as well as the graven images of the nations with whom they dwelt (see 2 Kings 17: 41), but only to their downfall. It seems that Jesus likened "mammon" to those idols. Mammon is a descriptive term for wealth or money, land, property or any material substance prized by

mankind, and it may be idolized either consciously or unconsciously. We will devotedly serve one or the other. Which will it be?

Moroni expands upon the principle thus:

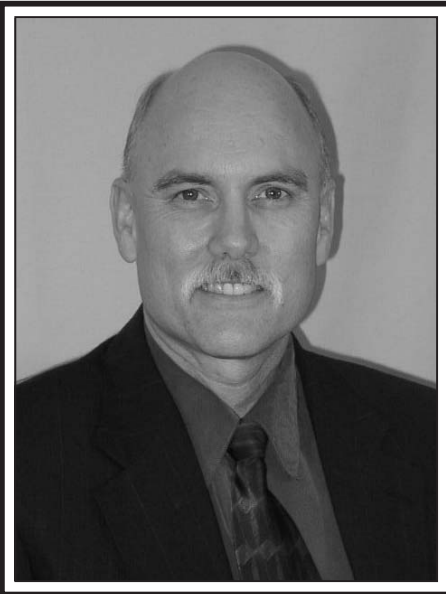
Mor. 7:9 *For behold, a bitter fountain can not bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore a man being a servant of the devil, can not follow Christ; and if he follow Christ, he can not be a servant of the devil.*

Jesus seemed to favor the mammon world upon one occasion, but it was only to illustrate a principle of faithfulness. It did not approve of the service to "mammon."

Luke 16:9-12 *And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

He is saying here: Be faithful in worldly affairs (employment, schooling, other social functions or responsibilities). If not so, how can you be faithful to God? The world will honor such, receiving one into historic importance and acclaim. But He follows this up in v. 13 by what we have recorded from Matt. 6:24 above, emphasizing the prime lesson of choosing to serve God rather than mammon.

Articles of Faith & Practice



By Elder Gordon McCann

Article #16

A scribe (lawyer), who was a member of the Pharisee sect, desiring to test Jesus, asked him the following question:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Jesus responded with the following:

"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

Jesus had only quoted for the scribe that which had been recorded long ago as part of the commandments given to the children of Israel in the days of Moses. They all had access to these commandments but they had a difficult time with their application.

"But behold, the Jews were a stiff-necked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall..." (Jacob 3:22-23).

As the above scripture pointed out, the Jews were blind

Article #16

We believe the Church of Christ comprehends the true brotherhood of man where each esteems his brother as himself and wherein the divine command to "love your neighbor as yourself" is demonstrated by the prevalence of social equality.

because they were looking beyond the mark that Jesus was endeavoring to show them. They had forgotten that mankind was created in the image of

God and that we all had come from the same blood.

"Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning, after mine own image" (Eth 1:80).

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..." (Acts 17:26).

After Judas had left the upper room to betray Christ, Jesus spoke to His disciples and gave them the following:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

Jesus was soon to be hung on the cross for the purpose of

bringing all mankind back into the presence of God, giving all mankind the opportunity, through the grace that is applied to those who would keep His commandments, to come before their God justified again in His presence. This ultimate sacrifice that Jesus was about to make was made out of His pure love for His Father in heaven and His creation (mankind), and through His obedience to His Father's will in all things.

"And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mat 26:39).

So by having this gift of charity (pure love of Christ) within our hearts we would not have a mind to hurt our neigh-

bor physically or mentally. We would exercise patience and longsuffering as did our Savior when He walked among the children of men. We would love our enemies and do good to them that hate and persecute us and pray for them that despitefully use us. That is how we can show the world that we are God's children, having a desire to be perfect according to the true calling of all who would be true followers of Him.

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. 5:14).

ANNOUNCEMENT

APRIL MINISTERS' CONFERENCE 2004

As instructed by the 1964 April Ministers' Conference be advised that the 2004 April Ministers' Conference will begin on Monday, April 5, 2004; "Conference Sunday," will be Sunday, April 4, 2004. The first business session will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday, April 5, 2004, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot. According to action taken during the 2003 April Ministers' Conference, Solemn Assembly will be held Friday, April 2nd, and Saturday, April 3rd, 2004, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot.

All committee reports should be forwarded to the Conference Secretary at least two (2) weeks in advance of the beginning of the first business session. As is always the case, it is requested that any business desiring to be placed before the 2004 April Ministers' Conference be forwarded in advance of the first business meeting so that document packets may be completed for distribution.

The mailing address for the above requested information is:

**Harvey E. Seibel,
April Ministers'
Conference Secretary
9800 E. 32nd Street S.
Independence, MO 64052**

*Your brother in the Lord's work,
Harvey E. Seibel,
2004 April Ministers'
Conference Secretary
Church of Christ
(Temple Lot)*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Camp Teen Challenge 2004

Date: 4 January 2004
To: All Prospective CIT's
From: Bro. Robert Hedrick
RE: 2004 CIT Sign-ups

Prospective CIT's:

Happy New Year to all! The New Year is here and so it is time to start preparing for the Teen Challenge 2004. We are calling out to all prospective CIT's who would like to take the Challenge and sign-up for Camp.

It may seem early to sign up for camp; however, we need your help from the very start of this important service. As taken from Mosiah 1:49: "...that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God." We are **CHALLENGING** you to be in **SERVICE** of your God. **WE NEED YOU!!!** Below are a few details relating to camp.

When is Camp? Camp will be held this year from July 25th through July 30th 2004.

How do you sign up? That is the easy part. Please e-mail Bro. Bob Hedrick at (bobnliza@juno.com) or call at 602-494-9661.

When do you need to sign-up by? We are asking that you sign up to be a CIT no later than May 10th. We need your help in setting up classes and taking part in the planning process of camp.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity! Additionally, be thinking about any suggestions or ideas that you may have for a class at camp!

Don't delay, and sign-up today! We are looking forward to seeing you there!

May God Bless,
Brother Robert Hedrick

P. S. Keep in mind the camp theme for this year. At your first chance, please look up and read the following: **Mosiah 2:13-17.**

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CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The **2004 Ministers' Conference** (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 4. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 5. A **Solemn Assembly** will be held prior to the conference, on April 2 & 3. All services will be held on the Temple Lot.

The **2004 Ministers' Conference** (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 2, 3 and 4, at Independence, Missouri.

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Send all orders to the **Church of Christ, P.O. Box 472, Independence, Missouri 64051-0472**

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Zion's Hymnal (non-members)	18.00

†Cost of mailing will be added.

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Articles of Faith & Practice of the Church of Christ	Evidences of the Book of Mormon
Article of Faith, #1 (concerning God; earliest Restoration history)	First Presidency or First Apostles?
Article of Faith, #9 - (concerning the Bible and Book of Mormon)	God's Promises to Israel
Baptism for the Dead—A Fallacy	God's Purpose in America
Book of Commandments, The - Its Role in the History of the Restoration	Great Plan of Redemption, The
Brief Commentary: Book of Commandments & Doctrine and Covenants	Is Marriage for Time and Eternity?—A Fallacy
Brief History of the Church of Christ, A	Last Maya King and the Liberation of Jerusalem, The
Call to National Repentance, A - Hearken to the Words of Jesus Christ	Latter Day Apostasy, A
Christian Sabbath is the Lord's Day, The - Sunday	Latter Day Restoration, The
Colored Tracts to Native Americans: 1) Book in the Stone Box, 2) Did you Know?, 3) Epistle to American Indians, 4) Promises of God and Straight Talk	Priesthood—Divine Authority
Concerning Marriage and Polygamy	Principles of the Gospel—Baptism
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