

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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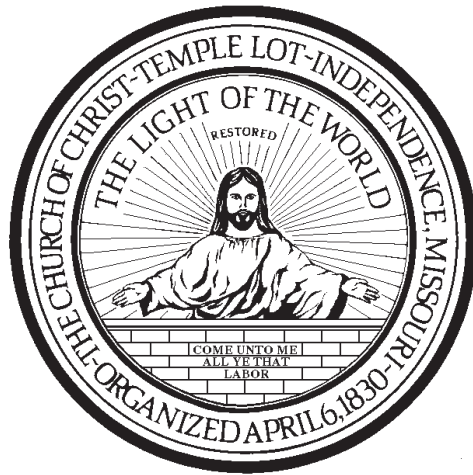
*"...Live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings
which he doth bestow upon you..."*

Alma 16:238

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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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

SERMON

AMERICA

“And it came to pass that I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren. And it came to pass that the angel said unto me, Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren! And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise...” (1 Nephi 3:145-149).

The following is an historical account of one of the first significant gentile migrations to “the promised land,” and why we celebrate “Thanksgiving” to this day.

THE PILGRIMS AND AMERICA'S FIRST THANKSGIVING

The Pilgrims, who celebrated the first Thanksgiving in Amer-

ica, were fleeing religious persecution in their native England. In 1609 a group of Pilgrims left England for the religious freedom in Holland where they lived and prospered. After a few years their children were speaking Dutch and had become attached to the Dutch way of life. This worried the Pilgrims. They considered the Dutch frivolous and their ideas a threat to their children's education and morality.

So they decided to leave Holland and travel to the New World. Their trip was financed by a group of English investors, the Merchant Adventurers. It was agreed that the Pilgrims would be given passage and supplies in exchange for their working for their backers for seven years.

On September 6, 1620, the Pilgrims set sail for the New World on a ship called the Mayflower. They sailed from Plymouth, England, and aboard were 44 Pilgrims, who called themselves the “Saints,” and 66 others, whom the Pilgrims called the “Strangers.”

The long trip was cold and damp and took 65 days. Since there was the danger of fire on



By Elder Gordon McCann

the wooden ship, the food had to be eaten cold. Many passengers became sick and one person died by the time land was sighted on November 10th.

The long trip led to many disagreements between the “Saints” and the “Strangers.” After land was sighted a meeting was held and an agreement was worked out, called the Mayflower Compact, which guaranteed equality and unified the two groups. They joined together and named themselves the “Pilgrims.”

Although they had first sighted land off Cape Cod they

did not settle until they arrived at Plymouth, which had been named by Captain John Smith in 1614. It was there that the Pilgrims decide to settle. Plymouth offered an excellent harbor. A large brook offered a resource for fish. The Pilgrims biggest concern was attack by the local Native American Indians. But the Patuxets were a peaceful group and did not prove to be a threat.

The first winter was devastating to the Pilgrims. The cold, snow and sleet were exceptionally heavy, interfering with the workers as they tried to construct their settlement. March brought warmer weather and the health of the Pilgrims improved, but many had died during the long winter. Of the 110 Pilgrims and crew who left England, less than 50 survived the first winter.

On March 16, 1621, what was to become an important event took place: an Indian brave walked into the Plymouth settlement. The Pilgrims were frightened until the Indian called out "Welcome" (in English!).

His name was Samoset and he was an Abnaki Indian. He had learned English from the captains of fishing boats that had sailed off the coast. After staying the night Samoset left the next day. He soon returned with another Indian named Squanto who spoke better English than Samoset. Squanto told the Pilgrims of his voyages across the ocean and his visits to England and Spain. It was in England where he had learned

English.

Squanto's importance to the Pilgrims was enormous and it can be said that they would not have survived without his help. It was Squanto who taught the Pilgrims how to tap the maple trees for sap. He



taught them which plants were poisonous and which had medicinal powers. He taught them how to plant the Indian corn by heaping the earth into low mounds with several seeds and fish in each mound. The decaying fish fertilized the corn. He also taught them to plant other crops with the corn.

The harvest in October was very successful and the Pilgrims found themselves with enough food to put away for the winter. There were corn, fruits and vegetables, fish to be packed in salt, and meat to be cured over smoky fires.

The Pilgrims had much to celebrate. They had built homes in the wilderness, they had raised enough crops to keep

them alive during the long coming winter, and they were at peace with their Indian neighbors. They had beaten the odds and it was time to celebrate.

The Pilgrim Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to be shared by all the colonists and the neighboring Native Americans. They invited Squanto and the other Indians to join them in their celebration. Their chief, Massasoit, and 90 braves came to the celebration, which lasted for three days. They played games, ran races, marched and played drums. The Indians demonstrated their skills with the bow and arrow and the Pilgrims demonstrated their musket skills. Exactly when the festival took place is uncertain, but it is believed the celebration took place in mid-October.

The following year the Pilgrims harvest was not as bountiful, as they were still unused to growing the corn. During the year they had also shared their stored food with newcomers and the Pilgrims ran short of food.

The third year brought a spring and summer that was hot and dry with the crops dying in the fields. Governor Bradford ordered a day of fasting and prayer, and it was soon thereafter that the rain came. To celebrate - November 29th of that year was proclaimed a day of thanksgiving. This date is believed to be the real true beginning of the present Thanksgiving Day.

The custom of an annually celebrated thanksgiving, held

after the harvest, continued through the years. During the American Revolution (late 1770s) a day of national thanksgiving was suggested by the Continental Congress.

In 1817 New York State had adopted Thanksgiving Day as an annual custom. By the middle of the 19th century many other states also celebrated a Thanksgiving Day. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln appointed a national day of thanksgiving. Since then each president has issued a Thanksgiving Day proclamation, usually designating the fourth Thursday of each November as the holiday.

While writing to Margaret Osaka in Africa I was thinking upon the past events of the hurricanes that had swept across our southern states with all their devastation, along with all the political turmoil, especially against those things that our founding fathers held to be true, and wrote the following:

Many things and events are happening to America, which are testing its people. I believe God is trying their faith, calling them to come back and to worship Him instead of their dumb idols (self interests, and indulgences). I hope it will not take a complete collapse before people begin to understand that we must worship the God of this land or be swept off of it like those that were on this land before us. God is truly calling for repentance on all our parts.

What is in store for America?

3 Nephi 9:98-101: *"Therefore it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, whom the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said,) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant; And my people who are a remnant of Jacob, shall be among the Gentiles, yea, in the midst of them, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Their hand shall be lifted up upon their adversaries, and all their enemies shall be cut off. Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles, except they repent, for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots, and I will cut off the cities of thy land and throw down all thy strongholds...."*

What we are seeing today:

2 Nephi 12:19: *"Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of nought, and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth...."*

Isaiah 5:20: *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"*

Comfort in Knowledge:

Matthew 24:32-34: *"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender,*

and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

We are living in this period of time:

Revelation 16:12-14: *"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

Three Unclean Spirits like Frogs come:

1 out of the mouth of the dragon – Satan.

Rev 12:9: *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

2 out of the mouth of the beast – Catholic Pope.

3 The Holy Roman Empire – The second beast described in Rev 13:11-18.

4 out of the mouth of the false prophet – Mohammad (Islam). There are approximately 1.2 billion Muslims world wide (second largest religion), or 22% of the world's population, with a growth rate of 2.9%. (Note: world population growth rate is

2.3%.) Christianity is 33% of the world population (the largest religion).

The purposes of the “unclean spirits” are to deceive the world.

Revelation 16:15: *“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”*

they need not look forward anymore for a Messiah to come, For there should not any come, save it should be a false Messiah, which should deceive the people....”

Satan

2 Nephi 12:24-28: *“For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them*

letter that he is *Romanus natus* (Roman-born) is certainly not **i n c o n s i s t e n t**. [1] ([Http://www.usafricaonline.com/arinzechido.html](http://www.usafricaonline.com/arinzechido.html)) However, his being of African heritage does not prove that he was a *black* African, as at that time most natives of that continent’s Mediterranean shores were not black. No visual representation of Gelasius, or description of his skin color, survives to settle the issue.

Muhammad

Muhammad was born in 570/1 A.D. (Note: This coincides with the Lombard’s invasion and collapse of the Roman Empire.)

The Koran was created by God and given to Muhammad by direct revelation through the angle Gabriel (angel of revelation). The messages that Muhammad had received (610 AD) were in rhythmic, beautifully phrased language, suitable for reciting and memorizing. All of the chapters except one begin by affirming that God is “merciful and compassionate.” The Koran declares that “reforming the earth” is the ideal of human endeavor.

Muhammad is the apostle (prophet) of God. The word translated “apostle” is *rasul*. It expresses Muhammad’s role as God’s messenger and as the head of the community of God’s people. Muhammad is the greatest of the prophets and “seal” of the prophets (he authenticated the message of the earlier prophets and brought to completion their mission). Af-

...We must worship the God of this land or be swept off of it like those that were on this land before us. God is truly calling for repentance on all our parts.

Matthew 24:42-44: *“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”*

False Messiah to deceive the people.

2 Nephi 11:28-37: *“And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work, and a wonder among the children of men. Wherefore, he shall bring forth his words unto them, which words shall judge them at the last day; For they shall be given them for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah, who was rejected by them; And unto the convincing of them that*

up to anger against that which is good; And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well; And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none: And thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.”

The Pope

The Bishop of Rome claims to be God incarnate, the Vicar of Christ, on earth.

Note: Pope Gelasius I (492 – 496) was the first Pope to use this term. (Note: Some have asserted that Gelasius was a black African by descent, because the [Liber Pontificalis](#) plainly states that he was *natione Afer* (‘[African](#) by birthright’). Gelasius’ own statement in a

ter him there can be no successor to the office of prophet. While God has highly favored him above all other humans, Muhammad is not more than human. One of the stories told of the Prophet tells of a journey he made from Mecca to Jerusalem just before the hegira. From the site in Jerusalem where the Dome of the Rock now stands, Muhammad soared up into the seventh heaven on the back of the steed Burak. He was admitted to the presence of God and then returned to earth.

Satan's Goal

3 Nephi 1:40: "And thus did Satan get possession of the hearts of the people again, inso-much that he did blind their eyes, and lead them away to believe that the doctrine of Christ was a foolish and a vain thing."

1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Behold, I have told you before

Matthew 24:21-25: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and

shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before."

What can we do to avoid being deceived?

1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Helaman 2:31: "Nevertheless, they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God."

Moroni 6:6: "And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus...."

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

Mosiah 2:12-22: "And there is none other salvation, save this which hath been spoken of; neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved, except the conditions which I have told you. Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the

Lord can comprehend. And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them."

Alma 16:237-238: "And now my beloved brethren, I desire that ye should remember these things, and that ye should work out your salvation with fear before God, and that ye should no more deny the coming of Christ; that ye contend no more against the Holy Ghost, but that ye receive it, and take upon you the name of Christ; that ye humble yourselves even to the dust, and worship God in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth; And that ye live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you; yea, and I also exhort you my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, that ye may not be led away by the temptation of the devil, that he may not overpower you, that ye may not become his subjects at the last day: for behold, he rewardeth you no good thing."

The Communion of Our Lord

A FEW THOUGHTS



By Harvey E. and
Harvey L. Seibel

*“And he said unto them, He that eateth this bread, eateth of my body to his soul, and he that drinketh of this wine, drinketh of my blood to his soul, **and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled**”* 3 Nephi 9:44.

*“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him*

up at the last day” John 6:53-54.

The injunction is clear: in order to have spiritual life, one must take the sacrament—and yet it is possible for baptized members to fall into condemnation for partaking.

*“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body**”* 1 Corinthians 11:27, 29.

*“And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly, to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it, **for whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul...**”* 3 Nephi 8:60.

Thus we see how important it is to examine all scriptures pertinent to a subject, else how easily we could inadvertently fall into error and condemna-



tion!

In fact, many religions of today trivialize the ordinances of the gospel by focusing on certain scriptures and ignoring others.

There are those who dismiss works as evidence of faith, since the scriptures say that we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8).

Others feel that baptism is not necessary for salvation, since the scriptures also state that, **“...whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** Romans 10:13.

Even the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost can be seen as unnecessary, as scripture states that, **“...the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that they may know good from evil...”** Moroni 7:14.

How easy it is to be de-

ceived, simply by isolating scripture that supports one side of an issue, while ignoring scripture that supports an opposing viewpoint. How important it is that we hold fast to the whole rod of iron—for the complete Word of God is infallible!

“...Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” Luke 12:1.

This is not to say that leaven in and of itself is bad, for we also find its use commended:

Truly the emblems are emblematic of our Savior, for just as Christ Himself was the perfect sacrifice and saw no corruption, even in death, so the emblems had not the corruption of leaven or fermentation.

Which is why some refuse the sacrament—not out of unworthiness, but because of what is being served.

In the matter of leaven, the scriptures are quite clear. **“Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven...”** Exodus 34:25.

Scripture tends to equate leaven with sin.

*“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**”* 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

*“Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; **they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord**”* Leviticus 23:17.

*“**And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God**”* Amos 4:5.

However, in the matter of the wine the scriptures seem to be divided, for on the one hand it is spoken of as evil, and on the other it speaks of life.

So it would seem as though Paul was admonishing Timothy to take for his health that which is elsewhere called a mocker (1 Timothy 5:23; Proverbs 20:1).

And it would appear that Jesus turned the water at the marriage feast in Cana into that

which we are not to even look upon (John 2:3-11; Proverbs 23:31-32).

Finally, it would seem that we are commanded to use in the Lord’s communion that which a drinker thereof has a woe pronounced against (Matthew 26:27; Isaiah 5:11; 2 Nephi 8:81, 92).

Are the scriptures in conflict?

One way to resolve this dilemma is to go to the Last Supper and determine what the Saviour served. The Last Supper occurred during the week of Passover, during which leaven (and thus fermentation) were forbidden (Exodus 12:19). So Christ, if He were obedient to His own law, would have served unleavened bread and unfermented wine.

Truly the emblems are emblematic of our Savior, for just as Christ Himself was the perfect sacrifice and saw no corruption, even in death (Acts 2:27), so the emblems had not the corruption of leaven or fermentation.

Historians and commentators concur, affirming that the Jews went to great lengths to preserve the fruit of the vine in an unfermented state.

“In the Holy Land they do not commonly use fermented wines. The best wines are preserved sweet and unfermented. The Jews do not, in their feasts for sacred purposes, including the marriage feast, ever use any kind of fermented drinks. In their oblations and libations, both private and public, they employ the fruit of the vine - that is, fresh grapes - unfermented grape juice, and raisins,

as the symbol of benediction. **Fermentation is to them always a symbol of corruption, as in nature and science it is itself decay, rottenness**" Dr. S. M. Isaacs, eminent Jewish rabbi.

The only way to reconcile this apparent discrepancy in scripture is to recognize that there must be two types of wine spoken of, the one good and tending to life, the other bad, and leading to condemnation.

Yet though the preponderance of evidence supports this, there is still division over what should be used in the Lord's supper. In fact, there are those who feel that the entire issue detracts from the sacrament, believing that it is the spirit in which the emblems are taken that is of the greater importance.

Modern day revelation supports this view:

"For behold I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory..." *Book of Commandments 28:2.*

The danger here is that a broad interpretation of this revelation could result in all manner of perversions. It's said that at least on one occasion one restoration group served pizza and coke in the Lord's supper.

Perhaps we could better understand one another if we were to consider that it may be as offensive to some to think of serving coffee and doughnuts in the sacrament as it is for others to contemplate the use of

alcohol.

This is in no way intended to diminish or slight the blessings which many enjoy, regardless of what they partake, for we know the Lord blesses us according to our faith. So, too, there are those from all religions whose faith has been rewarded with great and mighty miracles—but these blessings do not justify those religions.

Nevertheless, we find ourselves at an impasse, for while many may partake freely, others are forced, as a matter of conscience, to refrain.

It should be understood that none are justified in demanding that all accept their interpretation of a matter, for the scriptures are quite clear in matters concerning conscience.

*"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that **there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.** ...All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. **And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin**" Romans 14:14, 20-23.*

And herein lies the solution, for though some may feel it is sin to consume alcohol, whether as part of the Lord's supper or otherwise, **none feel that it is sin to drink grape juice.**

Thus scripture places the greatest responsibility upon those who feel that it doesn't make a difference what is served in the Lord's supper, for they are enjoined by scripture to accommodate their weaker brethren, at the risk of causing offence and falling under condemnation themselves.

Knowing that we will not see eye to eye until the Lord redeems again Zion (Isaiah 52:8), it behooves us to honor and serve one another in brotherly love and kindness.



THE GREAT APOSTASY AND THE RESTORATION

ATTENTION YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER INQUIRERS AFTER THE TRUTH

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WITH HEADQUARTERS IN INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI
THE ONLY CHURCH ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS



By Harvey E. Seibel

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST
(TEMPLE LOT)

(CONTINUED)



PART 11

“On the subject of bringing to light the unsealed part of this record, it may be proper to say, that our brother was expressly informed, that it must be done with an eye single to the glory of God; if this consideration did not wholly characterize all his proceedings in relation to it, the adversary of truth would overcome him, or at least prevent his making that proficiency in this glorious work which he otherwise would.

“While describing the place where the record was deposited,

he gave a minute relation of it, and the vision of his mind being opened at the same time, he was permitted to view it critically; and previously being acquainted with the place, he was able to follow the direction of the vision, afterward, according to the voice of the angel, and obtain the book” (*Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 1, pp. 79-80).

Continuing, Oliver writes:

“You will remember that in my last I brought my subject down to the evening, or night of the 21st of September, 1823, and gave an outline of the conversation of the angel upon the important fact of the blessings, promises and covenants to Israel, and the great manifestations of favor to the world, in the ushering in of the fulness of the gospel, to prepare the way for the second advent of the Messiah, when he comes in the glory of the Father

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DIFFERS FROM OTHER CHURCHES? OR HOW OUR CHURCH IS BETTER THAN ANY OTHER? DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHAT CHURCH WE JOIN? IF THESE OR SIMILAR QUESTIONS HAVE COME TO MIND THEN THE MATERIAL PRESENTED IN THIS SERIES SHOULD BE HELPFUL.

with the holy angels...

"...The vision was renewed twice before morning, unfolding farther, and still farther the mysteries of godliness and those things to come. In the morning he went to his labor as usual, but soon the vision of the heavenly messenger was renewed, instructing him to go immediately and view those things of which he had been informed, with a promise that he should obtain them if he followed the directions and went with an eye single to the glory of God.

"Accordingly he repaired to the place which had thus been described. But it is necessary to give you more fully the express instructions of the angel, with regard to the object of this work in which our brother had now engaged - He was to remember that it was the work of the Lord, to fulfill certain promises previously made to a branch of the house of Israel, of the tribe of Joseph, and when it should be brought forth must be done expressly with an eye, as I said before, single to the glory of God, and the welfare and restoration of the house of Israel.

"You will understand, then, that no motive of a pecuniary, or earthly nature, was to be suffered to take the lead of the heart of the man thus favored. The allurements of vice, the contaminating influence of wealth, without the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, must have no place in the heart nor be suffered to take from it that warm desire for the glory and kingdom of the Lord, or, instead of obtaining, disappointment and reproof would most assuredly follow. Such was the instruction and this the caution.

"Alternately, as we could naturally expect, the thought of the previous vision was ruminating in his mind, with a reflection of the brightness and glory of the heavenly messenger; but again a thought would start across the mind on the prospects of obtaining so desirable a treasure - one in all human probability sufficient to raise him above a level with the common earthly fortunes of his fellow men, and relieve his family from want, in which, by misfortune and sickness they were placed...

"It is sufficient to say that such were his reflections during his walk of from two to three miles: the distance from his father's house to the place pointed out. And to use his own words it seemed as though two invisible powers were influencing, or striving to influence his mind - one with the reflection that if he obtained the object of his pursuit, it would be through the mercy and condescension of the Lord, and that every act or performance in relation to it, must be in strict accordance with the instruction of that personage who communicated the intelligence to him first; and the other with the thoughts and reflections like those previously mentioned - contrasting his former and present circumstances in life with those to come. That precious instruction recorded on the sacred page - pray always - which was expressly impressed upon him, was at length entirely forgotten, and as I previously remarked, a fixed determination to obtain and aggrandize himself, occupied his mind when he arrived at the place where the record was found... (*ibid.*, pp. 156, 157, 158).

From these writings of Oli-

ver Cowdery we have the following interesting record of Joseph's meeting with the angel at the hill and his attempt to take the record from the place of their deposit.

"You will have wondered, perhaps, that the mind of our brother should be so occupied with the thoughts of the goods of this world, at the time of arriving at Cumorah, on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1823, after having been rapt in the visions of heaven during the night, and also seeing and hearing in open day; but the mind of man is easily turned, if it is not held by the power of God through the prayer of faith, and you will remember that I have said that two invisible powers were operating upon his mind during his walk from his residence to Cumorah, and that the one urging the certainty of wealth and ease in this life, had so powerfully wrought upon him, that the great object so carefully and impressively named by the angel, had entirely gone from his recollection that only a fixed determination to obtain now urged him forward. In this, which occasioned a failure to obtain, at that time, the record, do not understand me to attach blame to our brother; he was young, and his mind easily turned from correct principles, unless he could be favored with a certain round of experience. And yet, while young, untraditionated and untaught in the systems of the world, he was in a situation to be led into the great work of God, and be qualified to perform it in due time.

"After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in remov-

ing the soil from the edges of the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents. No sooner did he behold this sacred treasure than his hopes were renewed, and he supposed his success certain; and without first attempting to take it from its long place of deposit, he thought, perhaps there might be something more equally as valuable, and to take only the plates, might give others an opportunity of obtaining the remainder, which could he secure, would still add to his store of wealth. These, in short, were his reflections, without once thinking of the solemn instruction of the heavenly messenger, that all must be done with an express view of glorifying God.

“On attempting to take possession of the record a check was produced upon his system, by an invisible power which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this he knew not - there was the pure unsullied record as had been described - he had heard of the power of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without pre-meditating he exclaimed, ‘Why can I not obtain this book?’ ‘Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord,’

answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked, and to his astonishment, there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days, were brought to his mind: he thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite, and when this holy messenger from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come, to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the record, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and bear them away.

“At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condescension and mercy: the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he thus stood gazing and admiring, the angel said, ‘Look!’ and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, ‘All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold,

whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: it is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who keep the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promise, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record might be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them, must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, be-

cause they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only a precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested and the power of Satan: you see that there is nothing that is desirable in the works of darkness; that they cannot bring happiness; that those who are overcome therewith are miserable, while on the other hand the righteous are blessed with a place in the kingdom of God where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God and that he will fulfil his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven. - This is

the sign: When these things begin to be known, that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow: they will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of man shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow this church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the ten tribes of Israel will be revealed in the north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet - 'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord' - But, notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction the arm of the Lord will be extended, and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the

nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage: with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel. Now, go thy way, remembering what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations and all the arts and devices of the wicked one. - Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, that when he shall manifest unto thee, thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain those precious things" (*ibid.*, pp. 197-199).

Says Lucy of this experience,

"When the angel ascended the second time, he left Joseph overwhelmed with astonishment, yet gave him but a short time to contemplate the things which he had told him before he made his reappearance, and rehearsed the same things over, adding a few words of caution and instruction, thus: that he must beware of covetousness, and he must not suppose the Record was to be brought forth with the view of getting gain, for this was not the case, but that it was to bring forth light and intelligence, which had for a long time been lost to the world; and that when he went to get the plates, he must be on his guard, or his mind would be filled with darkness. The angel then told him to tell his father all which he had both seen and heard. The next morning Alvin, and Joseph, were reaping together in the

field, and as they were reaping Joseph stopped quite suddenly, and seemed to be in a very deep study. Alvin, observing it, hurried him, saying, 'We must not slacken our hands or we will not be able to complete our task.' Upon this Joseph went to work again, and after labouring a short time, he stopped just as he had done before. This being quite unusual and strange, it attracted the attention of his father, upon which he discovered that Joseph was very pale. My husband, supposing that he was sick, told him to go to the house, and have his mother doctor him. He accordingly ceased his work, and started, but on coming to a beautiful green, under an apple-tree, he stopped and lay down, for he was so weak he could proceed no further. He was here but a short time, when the messenger whom he saw the previous night, visited him again, and the first thing he said was, 'Why did you not tell your father that which I commanded you to tell him?' Joseph replied, 'I was afraid my father would not believe me.' The angel rejoined, 'He will believe every word you say to him.'

"Joseph then promised the angel that he would do as he had been commanded. Upon this, the messenger departed, and Joseph returned to the field, where he had left my husband and Alvin; but when he got there, his father had just gone to the house, as he was somewhat unwell. Joseph then desired Alvin to go straightway and see his father, and inform him that he had something of great importance to communicate to him, and that he wanted him to come out into the field where they were at work. Alvin did as he was re-

quested, and when my husband got there, Joseph related to him all that had passed between him and the angel the previous night and that morning. Having heard this account, his father charged him not to fail in attending strictly to the instruction which he had received from this heavenly messenger.

"Soon after Joseph had this conversation with his father, he repaired to the place where the plates were deposited" (*Lucy Smith's History*, pp. 81-83).

Returning to Joseph's account,

"I obeyed, I returned back to my father in the field and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me, that it was of God, and to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there. Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario Co. New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood; on the west side of this hill not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates deposited in a stone box: this stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all round was covered with earth. Having removed the earth and obtained a lever which I got fixed under the edge of the stone and with a little exertion raised it up, I looked in and there indeed did I behold the plates,

the Urim and Thummim and the Breastplate as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement; in the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them. I made an attempt to take them out but was forbidden by the messenger and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would until four years from that time, but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. Accordingly as I had been commanded I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews respecting what the Lord was going to do and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days. As my father's worldly circumstances were very limited, we were under the necessity of laboring with our hands, hiring by days works and otherwise as we could get opportunity, sometimes we were at home and sometimes abroad and by continued labor were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance" (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, pp. 771-772).



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CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The **2006 Ministers' Conference** (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 1, 2 and 3, at Independence, Missouri.

The **2006 Ministers' Conference** (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 2. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 3. A **Solemn Assembly** will be held prior to the conference, on March 31 and April 1. All services will be held on the Temple Lot.

2005 CHURCH OF CHRIST REUNIONS

MAY

Scripture Theme Camp

- ▶ May 13-15, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ Camp Shawnee Camp Area at Knob Noster State Park.
- ▶ For information contact:
Mark Hill, Jesse Lawrence, Randy Sheldon, Dan Lawrence, Dan Malone.

JUNE

Idaho Reunion

- ▶ June 3-5, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ The Southwestern Idaho Senior Citizen's Recreation Association, Inc. (S.I.S.C.R.A.).
- ▶ For information contact:
Roy Coon
3995 County Line Road
Emmett, Idaho 83617
(208) 365-34109
racoont21@juno.com or
racoont21@earthlink.net

Colorado Reunion

- ▶ June 10-12, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ The Orchard Mesa Local, 3233 B½ Road, Grand Junction, Colorado
- ▶ For information contact:
Karen Bell
PO Box 1137
Palisade, CO 81526
(970) 464-4624
kbell@gvii.net
- John Bell**
572 34 Road
Clifton, CO 81520
(970) 434-7100
jeeb54@gvii.net
- Allen Downs**
515 28½ Road
Grand Junction, CO 81501
(970) 245-8344
addowns@hotmail.com

Michigan Reunion

- ▶ June 25-26, Saturday-Sunday
- ▶ Bradley Local, Michigan
- ▶ For information, contact:
Duane Lee
2053 Fawn Ave.
Middleville, MI 49333
(269) 795-7420
- Randy Lee**
2953 Wing Rd.
Hastings, MI 49058-9537
(269) 948-8971

Springfield Rally

- ▶ June 26th, Sunday
- ▶ 2251 N. Golden; Springfield, Missouri.
- ▶ For information contact:
Elder Matt Case
(417) 832-8349
tabianhdmatt@hotmail.com
- Priest Martin Addie**
(417) 862-2255
ec05959@earthlink.net

JULY

Wake Up Camp 2005

- ▶ July 1-3, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ Bemidji Local Church, Bemidji, Minnesota
- ▶ For information contact:
Hannah Gould
(218) 586-2774
- Sam Gould**
(218) 586-3759

New York Reunion

- ▶ July 8-10, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ Hogansburg, New York
- ▶ For information contact:
In Canada:
Wayne and Susan Miller
868 Tollgate Road
Cornwall, Ontario
Canada K6H5R6
(613) 933-5469
- In the United States:
Eli and Gretchen Tarbell
PO Box 21
600 State Route 37
Hogansburg, New York 13655
(518) 358-2911
egtarbell@hotmail.com
- Dale and Terry Waldruff**
429 Country Road 34
Canton, New York 113617
(315) 265-1221
terrwald@slc.com

Church of Christ Teen Camp

- ▶ July 24-29, Sunday-Friday
- ▶ Camp Far Westa, near Stewartsville, Missouri
- ▶ For kids ages 12-18
- ▶ Camp Cost: \$115.00
- ▶ For information contact:
Michelle Oldham
5811 Duggleby
Davenport, IA 52807
(563) 359-1693
jnmham@mchsi.com

Scripture Adventure Camp

- ▶ July 28, Thursday
- ▶ Independence, Missouri
- ▶ For kids ages 5-11
- ▶ For information contact:
Randy and Becky Sheldon
(816) 229-6712
r-bsheldon@juno.com
- Jennifer Yates**
(602) 569-9296
a2zyates@cox.net

Missouri Reunion

- ▶ July 29-31, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ Church of Christ headquarters building located on the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri
- ▶ For information contact:
Roland Sarratt
15910 E. 36th Terr.
Independence, MO 64055
(816) 373-6605
r.sarratt@earthlink.net

Michael McGhee

18907 E. 6th St. North
Independence, MO 64056
(816) 796-6255

SEPTEMBER

Camp for All Ages

- ▶ September 16-18, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ The Pinnacles, about ten miles north of Columbia, Missouri
- ▶ For information contact:
Jesse Lawrence
jesselawrence@earthlink.net

Women's Retreat

- ▶ September 30-October 1, Friday-Saturday
- ▶ Lake Mauer Retreat Center in Excelsior Springs, Missouri.
- ▶ For women ages 18 and up
- ▶ Cost: \$45.00/person (includes one night accommodation and 3 meals)
- ▶ For information contact:
Carrie Geier
14609 E. Phelps
Independence, MO 64055
(816) 836-0035
geiers@kcnet.com
- Geri Adams**
2804 Westbrooke Circle
Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 228-8283
admsgeri@cs.com

NOVEMBER

Phoenix Reunion

- ▶ November 25-27, Friday-Sunday
- ▶ Phoenix, Arizona
- ▶ For information contact:
Pastor Bob Hedrick
2908 E Rockwood Dr
Phoenix, AZ 85050
(602) 494-9661
bobnliza@cox.net
- Assistant Pastors:**
Duane Ely
18814 N 30th St
Phoenix, AZ 85050
duanekathyely@aol.com
- Gordon McCann**
18808 N 30th St
Phoenix, AZ 85050
gjmccann@cox.net