

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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Saving Israel

As I read and listen to the news coverage of the pending "war against Iraq," I wonder how Saddam Hussein is a threat to us. True, individuals or small groups of murderers could come from Iraq and cause us harm, but small groups of murderers could also come from quite a number of countries and do the same thing as those from Iraq. Why is Saddam Hussein such a threat TODAY, that hasn't been true during and since the "Gulf War?"

As I look at the Middle East, it seems to me that the real party in interest is Israel. Israel is the only "democracy" in the region and it is allied with America. Perhaps we are only doing what Israel will do (if we don't?) Saddam Hussein has continually issued threats against the nation of Israel. I recently read one paper in which he said that he would push Israel into the sea, if Jordan would give him the right to take an army across their country. Is there any other country in the Middle East that seriously feels threatened by Iraq?

It is interesting to me that at the very time in history when Israel is prophesied to arise out of the bones of the earth (Ezekiel 37) that it is the center of such a world controversy. It is such a small country. If it was not composed of at least some of God's chosen people, it would hardly be noticed.

Because it is composed of at least some of God's people, his promises are sure. We are now seeing the fulfillment of some of those promises (Romans 11:25, 3 Nephi 7:27-43).

Life up your heads and rejoice!

TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

First Fruits Belong to God

After commenting on the joys of being in a musically inclined household as that of the Jordisons, Jan was our pianist and Michael had just sung a solo, High Priest Robert Rolfe shared a recent experience with Jack Ergo. While in Rob's office Jack asked how come there were so many walnuts on the Rolfe trees. Rob responded, "To tell you the truth, I prayed over those crops." Jack responded good naturedly, "That's cheating!"

"Now I don't know if you believe in prayer as I do, but you are supposed to pray over your crops, the scriptures tell us." With that he described the joys of picking that first tomato, using it on a BLT, with lot of other things that are not on Weight Watchers, and enjoying how good it tastes; of drinking the grape juice just pressed from the fruit (Linda has been canning the communion wine, with a little help from him, as well as preserving their own supply); the taste of an apple just picked from the tree "Nothing tastes so good as that first fruit that comes out of your crops in the fall." he declared, then announced that he would be talking about first fruits, but possibly not as we would suppose. "Often we talk about that as being tithing, and I'm not opposed to tithing, but that's not what I am going to be referring to."

With that, he turned our attention to the Book of Joshua, the sixth book of the Bible and a continuation of the story of Moses' journey with the Children of Israel as Joshua led them into the Promised Land.

The Book of Joshua a Type

"It has been said that the Book of Joshua is a type for the Book of Revelation - that the same things that occurred in Joshua will be occurring again at the end of time, and that there are some pretty good things to support that theory. If that is true, the book of Joshua is also a type for the building of Zion in terms of how we are going to get in there. There is no doubt that the entry of the children of Israel into the promised land was accompanied by many miraculous occurrences, and to me, maybe because of my experiences, is that the river stopped flowing downstream. You have heard of Moses parting the Red Sea with the waves going both ways, but the

amazing thing to me is that, if you believe the Book of Joshua, the river stopped flowing downstream. It just stopped. To me, that seems like a harder thing to do. I don't suspect that it is with God, but there's something about having been around the power of rivers in flood times, it doesn't just stop flowing. It starts backing up. If the water stops flowing downstream, it has to go someplace.

"That was a rather miraculous event, but perhaps more so, how many Children of Israel were there? A lot! And when they went to battle against Jericho, (I remember as a child singing 'Joshua beat the Battle of Jericho' which was a great song, but it's not true. It was God who beat the battle of Jericho.) The command of Joshua was that they were to take no spoil at all. If there were as many soldiers as I think there were, if you got half of them to obey an order, you would probably think you were doing well, but apparently there was only one family that violated that order. They took only one thing. They took the silver and gold and brought it to the tabernacle to the Priests. It became the Lord's. They did not keep it for themselves.

As a prelude to the reading from the scriptures, our speaker explained that Rahab was a harlot. She had a brothel, and here she is being saved. Brother Rolfe said he wanted to point this out for those of us who might think that harlots are not worthy of salvation. She and her family were the only ones out of Jericho who were saved, and she was the great, great, great ... grandmother of Jesus. That's why she is mentioned in the Book of Hebrews 11.

Our speaker read Joshua 6:17-19 and 21-26. It is the story of the seventh day of marching around the city when the people were instructed to blow their horns and to shout because the Lord had given them the city. The city and all that was in it was to be destroyed except Rahab and her family. And the silver, gold and vessels of brass and iron. Rob interjected, "I might point out that they told her to put this banner down the side of her house and that anybody who was in the house would be safe while anybody outside would not. Does that sound like something else that happened? Remember the Passover? If you are in the house, and you've got blood on the door frame, you are safe. If you're not, you're dead. It doesn't matter whether you are in a Jewish house or an Egyptian house or whether you are an Egyptian or whether you are Jewish. If you were in the house, you were safe, and that's the way it was here."

Rahab had hidden the spies who were scouting out the city and now Joshua sent the two men who had been hidden into the house to bring Rahab and all those with her out safely, and she was allowed to live in Israel because she hid the messengers. And the silver, gold and vessels of brass and iron were consecrated to the Lord and would come into the treasury of the Lord. They burnt the city with fire and commanded that the city never be rebuilt. Anyone who would attempt to rebuild it would lose his oldest and his youngest sons in death by doing it. Please read it all for yourself.

Some may ask, 'What has that to do with first fruits? Well, that is an illustration of the first city the Children of Israel go into. The first fruits, if you will, of war go to the Lord, and they continued giving those first fruits until they started being disobedient and started having trouble. As long as they were faithful to the Lord, they were all right.'

"I would like to point out to you a couple of things that were happening here. One of them is the commandment not to rebuild the city of Jericho It says, 'Don't build it, and if you do, what's going to happen to you? Your first born son and your youngest son are going to die! Did that happen? Yes, it did. During Ahab's day a man

rebuilt Jericho and his first born and his youngest son died in the process, and the prophecy came true. That could be just another one of those coincidences that we find happening in the scriptures so often - a coincidence that occurred just like God said it would. You find the story in 1 Kings, 16:34, if you want to look that up and learn who that was and just what occurred.

"The other thing I'd like to highlight on this account is the placing of all the precious things from the fall of Jericho in the treasury of the Lord. The first fruits is a feast, if you are familiar with the feasts of Moses. Moses says that commandment of first fruits is to be 'a statute forever throughout your generations.' (Leviticus 23:14). In other words, the first part of the harvest is given to the Lord - not the leftovers - not the part that is damaged or old or defective in some way - the FIRST fruits! You might say, 'What difference does it make? Well, God said it was to be the first fruits. That's the difference. If you are going to obey the commandment, you are going to follow God's instruction.

"In Deuteronomy 26:1-3 and 10-11 is found a specific command and a promise for those in Israel that keep the law." Brother Rolfe noted that this commandment came when the children of Israel were coming into the Promised Land. They were told to take of the first fruits that the Lord would give them of all their land, put it in a basket and take it to the "place which the Lord Thy God shall choose to put his name there." There they were to declare that they had brought the first fruits which the Lord had given them, 'set it before the Lord thy God and worship before the Lord Thy God; and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.' "Well, this is supposed to happen, and it is a commandment, not just for those days but Moses was pretty specific. It was supposed to go on for those people forever.

Sin Costs Something!

"There are many aspects of the feasts of Moses. If you see a Menorah it reminds you of those feasts. The Mosaic Menorah is supposed to have seven candles. There are nine candle menorahs that stand for the feasts of Purim and the feast of Hanukkah, but I am not going to get into those today; but one thing I would like to mention to you that was supposed to happen to the obedient Israelite. If they did these things that they were commanded, what was the benefit to them? Their sins were forgiven. The first fruits and the lambs and the pigeons, and all of these things were offerings for sin. When you sacrifice a lamb, one lesson that you ought to learn from that ritual is that sin costs something. It isn't free! It not only costs you something, it costs that lamb its life. Not only that, it points out that they were acting out that for all of us there was going to be a blood sacrifice that would take away our sins. In fact, due to the grace of God, we have that blood sacrifice. That's what Jesus Christ did when He took our sins upon him as He died on the cross.

First Corinthians 15: 19-23, Paul most eloquently says, in the best expression I have ever found of what the gospel is, 'I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye received and wherein ye stand.' I hope all of you have received this gospel and continue to stand in it, Rob interjected, because that's what he is saying to the Saints at Corinth, 'by which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you unless ye have believed in vain; for I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.'

“Just like the children of Israel put blood on their doorposts or on the lintel of their door, they were saved because they did that. It wasn't because of the blood. I can tell you this. There is nothing in that protein that is going to save you. It was because they did what God told them to do. They were obedient. And I can just tell you Saints this morning that you need to put the blood of Christ on the doorposts and on the lintel of your heart. If you do that, you can be cleansed of all sin as well.

“I would like to point out to you, too, that the uncircumcised were not permitted to take part in the Passover. So you are required to come to the Lord's table, if you will, being circumcised of heart. You need to be clean before the Lord. Paul goes on to say, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.'

The Good News - We Are Redeemed

“Isn't that the good news of the gospel? We are redeemed. The price has been paid. We are no longer shut out from the presence of God due to the sin of Adam. Then we don't have anything to worry about, right? It's OK to lie a little, steal a little, sin a little? If when we die, we are guilty, God will merely beat us with a few stripes, and we will all be saved in the Kingdom of God. Isn't that what the scripture says? No, it isn't! The Prophet Nephi says that philosophy is simply not true (1 Nephi 12:9-12). So, when Paul says, 'If you keep in memory what I preached unto you, you are going to be saved. If not, you have believed in vain.' I would say that you need to be thinking about the first fruits that you bring to this Communion table this morning; and I am talking about spiritual fruit. The reason is that I think it is very important to your eternal salvation as to whether or not you are producing those fruits and as to whether or not you are bringing those to the Lord.

“I would like you to consider a passage that is found in Luke 13:20-28. These are familiar words, but you may not have heard them in just this way before. I have mentioned this before, but I have found that when someone asked Jesus a question and that question is recorded, it is not just for curiosity that that question is put in the book. There is a lesson there for us to be learning. Would you agree that those questions are not just thrown in there extraneously?

“This scripture starts out with a question. 'And again he said 'Whereunto shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem. And there said one unto him, Lord, are there few only that be saved? and he answered him, and said, Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for I say unto you, Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able; for the Lord shall not always strive with man. Therefore, when once the Lord of the Kingdom is risen up, and hath shut the door of the kingdom, then ye shall stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But the Lord shall answer and shall say unto you, I will not receive you, for ye know not from whence ye are.

'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, ye know not from whence ye are; depart from me, all workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth among you, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the

prophets in the kingdom of God, and you are thrust out.' “Do you think he is talking about eating and drinking in thy presence right here?” Brother Rolfe asked, then answered, “That's probably what it's talking about.”

“Just as in the days of Noah, there comes a time when it's too late to repent. George Knotts says those who wait to repent at eleven o'clock find out they die at 10:45! There is something to that that is true. There comes a time when you are no longer able to be in a repentant spirit. You can't get God's Spirit in your life. It's too late to become righteous. Time has run out. Luke 13:25 says, 'When the Lord of the kingdom is risen up and hath shut the door of the kingdom ... ' Isn't that a kind of reminder of God shutting the door of Noah's ark? The door is shut now. You can't get in any more. It's too late then to say, 'Hey, I need a little more time. Let me get ready.' It's like the college students that are with you, when you get to the examination and say, 'I'm not ready for this today. I need more time,' and the teachers all say, 'That's no problem. How much more time do you need.' Isn't that the way it is? No. You don't get any more time, and that's the way it is in the case of delaying your repentance.

It Is Wisdom To Have Our First Fruits Ready

“I would like to turn also to the parable of the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. Most of you could almost recite that from memory, but I would like to read a little bit from that parable. Some of the virgins were called foolish. They were still virgins, but they were foolish. What was the foolish part of them. They were just as clean as the others, weren't they? Otherwise, they would not have been virgins. What were they waiting for? Waiting for their wedding. How many of you have not been ready for your wedding? It's a matter of when you are anticipating your wedding, you are going to be ready for that, aren't you? They were not getting ready for the wedding. They were waiting for the bridegroom. In Jewish tradition back then, when they were having a wedding, the bride was confined in a room and did not come out for several days. When Jesus used the example of their going into a house and the door being shut, he was using an example they understood. The reason they were called foolish is because they were not ready. They knew the bridegroom was coming, but they did not get prepared. So I want to read to you a few verses regarding their reaction Matthew 25, 9-12).

“They said they would go buy some oil, and while they were gone to buy, the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, Ye know me not.' Does that sound familiar to Luke 13. 'Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' In other words, be ready. You are not going to have time to go to Hy Vee and get your oil. That oil is symbolic of the Spirit of God - of personal righteousness. You can't cleanse a filthy vessel in a short time. You had better get working at it, particularly when you are the vessel.

“I would that all of us could exclaim like Nephi of old in kind of a Psalm that he wrote (2 Nephi 3:54-56). 'May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite. O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road? O, Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness.' Isn't that great imagery of that for which Nephi is asking?

“This is my challenge to you as you get ready to reach forth your hand, have you come ready to offer your first fruits to the Lord, or have you come with leftovers? And if you came with leftovers, do you think you are going to be able to microwave those somehow to make them spiritually palatable to the Lord? That’s what we do with other leftovers, we nuke them and then eat them. Is that what the Lord wants from us when he is telling us to bring our first fruits? The concept of fruit is used many ways in the scriptures, but one of those used in Galatians 5:22-25. Paul tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is, and the first one that he mentions is love, and there’s probably a good reason for that. He says, ‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW. Paul goes on to say, ‘If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit’, which is good advice for us.

“Have we come this morning ready to offer our first fruits to the Lord? Or have we come with left-overs?”

In Support of the Restoration

In these trying times of the Restoration, Brother Gerald Bolingbroke brought hope and encouragement to the saints of the church on Sunday, September 8. We exist as a church by the authority given of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. This authority is a continuation of the authority which Jesus himself demonstrated while on earth. Brother Bolingbroke began his sermon by reading a scripture from Luke 7:19 -23.

In the time of Jesus many questioned if Jesus was the Messiah or should they look for another. Even John the Baptist questioned. He sent his friends to question Jesus, “Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?” At the same time, Jesus had cured many people with infirmities, plaques, and evil spirits and had made a blind person see. Jesus told them to go and tell John what they had seen: the blind could see, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf could hear, the dead were raised, and to the poor, the gospel was preached.

When the messengers sent from John had departed, Jesus began to speak to the people concerning John. He told them he is the one of whom it is written. “Behold I send my messenger before my face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those who are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Luke 7:27-28.

By what authority did Jesus do things, the Pharisees and Lawyers questioned. By what authority do you break our traditions? By what authority do you say unto this man, this day thy sins are forgiven thee?

The Master dared to have his disciples pick corn on the Sabbath. He also healed a man on the Sabbath. To the Jewish mind the matter of authority was most important.

Where do we get the authority to work for the Lord? It is a question each of us must answer. Let us examine this question in the light of the events of the day in which Jesus was asked this question. It is interesting to note that when the chief priests and elders asked the question, Jesus answered them with a question: “The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven or of man?” The chief priests and elders did not dare answer this for if they said of heaven they would

have to admit his authority, and if they said of man, they feared the people who looked upon John as a prophet.

When the men came from John to ask who he was, Jesus did not enter into a scriptural dissertation. He only said, “Go tell John what things you have seen and heard.” The proof of His authority was evident in that which was coming to pass in the lives of men and women, not simply in what had been prophesied of by the prophets.

Once again, where do we get the authority to act in the stead of Christ? Christ proclaimed, “He has annointed me.” He could have ended with this. He could have explained on the manner of his annointing; or he could have justified it by what had happened in the past. But he spoke forthrightly. He connected his annointing with His mission.

He said he had been annointed, quoting from Isaiah, “to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; To preach the acceptable year of the Lord and then he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and he sat down. And the eyes of all those who were in the synagogue, were fastened on Him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in you ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered the gracious words which proceeded out of this mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?” Luke 4:18-22

Jesus connected His authority with His mission. In John 5:37-40 we find Him saying “but I have a greater witness than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself who sent me, hath borne witness of me. And verily I testify unto you, that ye have never heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape; For ye have not his word abiding in you, and him whom he hath sent, ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.”

We must recognize that His authority was based on fulfilling his mission and accomplishing the will of the Father. This is always the authority of the body of Christ and of his disciples.

There are many in the church today who question the authority of this restoration gospel. Some do not believe in Christ. They even oppose us when we try to support and proclaim this Gospel. Brother Bolingbroke went on to tell the saints that there are still some in the Religion Department at Graceland who are opposed to his and Yvonne Galusha’s Winter Term coming up in January of 2003, a trip to the historical sites of the Restoration. They and many others do not believe in the Book of Mormon and the Inspired Version of the Bible. They do not believe that this is the true church of God.

By what authority do we do things for Christ? We have been baptized by those of authority to do so. The priesthood have authority to administer the sacraments and ordinances of this church. We are told in the Inspired Version in Genesis 6:7, “Now this same priesthood which is in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also.”

In the Doctrine and Covenants we find in Section 83:2c- 3c, “And the sons of Moses, according to the holy priesthood, which he received under the hand of his father-in-law Jethro and Jethro received it under the hand of Caleb; and Caleb received it under the hand of Elihu; and Elihu under the hand of Jeremy; and Jeremy under the hand of Gad; and Gad under the hand of Esaias; and Esaias received it under the hand of God; Esaias also lived in the days of Abraham and was blessed of him, which Abraham received the

priesthood from Melchisedec ; who received it through the lineage of his fathers , even til Noah. And from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers; and from Enoch to Abel, who was slain by the conspiracy of his brother; who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man; which priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years. And the Lord confirmed a priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever, with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God. And the greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore in the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof, and authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.”

Now Moses tried to get the children of Israel sacrificed so they could see the face of God. But they hardened their hearts. So God took Moses out of their midst and the holy priesthood, and the lesser priesthood continued with them. This priesthood hold the keys of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel. This gospel is the gospel of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins.

Who was and who is the Christ? In the Inspired Version we find in Genesis 1:27, “And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so.” Jesus was in the beginning with God. He was more than a first century Jew. He was more than just a man. In John 1: 1 we find these words, “without him was not anything made which was made.” Yes, He was more than a philosopher, more than a teacher, more than a man--- for he shared with God in creation.

The distinguishing mark of the power of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and his ministry, is that it is the power unto salvation. He is concerned with the physical as well as the spiritual. This is illustrated in the story of the man with palsy. It would have been easy to heal the man’s body and to stop there. It would have robbed the man of a greater blessing. So Jesus emphasized the full healing. Before he made the sick man physically whole, Jesus said to him, “Son, thy sins are forgiven thee,” and then he addressed himself to the scribes: “Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Is it not easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; than to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he said to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thy house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and many glorified God, saying, We never saw the power of God after this manner.”

Mark 2:3-11

Christ chose to come down among men and live and die that we might live. By what authority? His is the authority of love, love which goes beyond us in our comprehension, love which surrounds us in creation, love from which we cannot separate ourselves. Recognizing the authority of infinite love, we are called upon to respond with love and to permit that love to grow within us and become the overwhelming factor in our lives.

Yes we have authority in this restoration gospel. We do not have a prophet as yet . We are in many ways similar to the time when the Reorganization was being formed. I would now like to relate

some experiences of W. W. Blair. From the Memoirs of President W.W. Blair.

In 1854, Blair moved from a farm near Amboy, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits at East Paw Paw, which was twenty five miles east of Amboy. In the latter part of 1855 his mind began to be deeply moved in respect to matters of religion, his former experience in the church, and his future prospects. This continued into 1856. At times his meditations and convictions were of such a range to finally make him resolve that, whatever others might do, it was his duty to honor God and seek to live in harmony with the light he had received of God.

He became acquainted personally with Elders John. E. Page, John Gaylord, and William Marks, who were formerly members and ministers in the church in the times of Joseph the Seer. They all resolved to meet together for a religious service when practicable and have Elders Page, Gaylord, and Landers preach the gospel as they might find opportunity. However their efforts in this direction did not meet with desired success, for it seemed the needed favor of God through the Holy Spirit was sadly lacking.

In the latter part of November, 1856, after nightfall, two young men entered into Blair’s store. He was impressed that they were Latter Day Saint ministers, though in those times they never saw or heard of any ministers of that denomination, except the previous ones mentioned. He perceived that they were watching his movements with much interest, and at length he concluded they wished to confer with him on business matters. He therefore stepped forward and accosted them, when the younger of the two, who afterward proved to be Edmunds C. Briggs, called him by name and greeted him with “Good Evening.” He explained who he was, and introduced Blair to his companion, Samuel H. Gurley.

In questioning them Blair learned they had just come from Amboy and desired to visit with Blair. He at once took them to his home, and on the way there asked them what called them into that region at that time.

They said they were sent forth of God by prophecy from Zarahemla,. Wisconsin, to visit the Latter Day Saints and to tell them that the Lord was reviving his work, and had begun the reorganization of the church in that region, that the Spirit of the Lord was teaching and guiding the Saints to a great degree. They also said that it had been revealed to them, at various times, in various places, and through different persons, that the time was near at hand when the Lord would call Joseph, the son of the Joseph Smith the Seer, to take the lead of the church. In this they seemed very sanguine, but to Blair it sounded to him as idle tales.

However, Blair was glad to meet them. On reaching his home he introduced them to his family, had refreshments prepared for them, and resolved to learn what He could in respect to their faith and the work they represented.

We find ourselves in a similar situation. We do not have a prophet to direct us.

Their discussion continued until three o’clock the next morning. It was now Sunday. They rested for a few hours, they again moved to the parlor, and after fervent prayers, they again entered into a critical discussion of the theories advocated by them. This continued until near noon, and it found them no nearer united than at the beginning. They now seemed to abandon the idea of convincing Blair of their theories by argument. Blair said to them if they knew their position to be correct on matters under consideration, to go ahead and that he might possibly learn it by and by.

Brother Gurley, who had been the chief speaker hitherto, seemed

reluctant to say anything further, whereupon Brother Briggs rose to his feet, took the Book of Mormon from the table, leafed it over rapidly as if seeking to find some particular passage, and then placing his hand on his mouth and trembling from head to feet, while tears coursed down his cheeks, seemed to read these words, "I the Lord, will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will forgive whom I will forgive." But these words are nowhere to be found in the Book of Mormon. Just as soon as Briggs began speaking, the Holy Spirit, such as had borne witness to Blair of the doctrine of Christ at the beginning seemed to fill the room and also the persons present with its enlightening, convincing, and heavenly power.

Brother Briggs raised his right hand and broke forth with a prophecy directed at Blair, declaring what had been his desires and intentions, declaring also that he would soon be released from his temporal affairs, would be called into the ministry, would be made "an apostle of the Lamb of God", be called to preach the gospel, and "thresh the Gentiles by the power of God's spirit"; said that the Lord would soon call Joseph, the Son of Joseph the Seer, to be president of the church, and that the standard then erected would never fall, also that the work of the Lord would go forth in power and triumph until its final completion. He pronounced by prophecy the blessing of health upon Blair's household, this, no doubt referring to his wife and their little daughter, Mary Caroline, both of whom for the sixteen months preceding had been in very poor health, but after which they became strong and vigorous.

When Brother Briggs sat down, Brother Gurley arose and spoke with great liberty and power in the spirit of prophecy. The manifestation of the Spirit of God on this occasion was greater, more searching and assuring than anything Blair, had ever before witnessed.

Relating these experiences to his wife, Blair assured her that the young men were indeed the servants of God (a matter she had doubted). She replied that she knew they were such, for the Lord, in answer to her secret prayer that morning, had given her the witness that they were the servants of God.

During the brief stay of these two inexperienced young ministers, the Lord gave abundant evidence through the Holy Spirit that they were his servants, and that their mission was indeed ordained of Him. As the holidays approached, Mrs. Blair and W.W. went by railway and sleigh to Blanchardville, Wisconsin near one hundred and fifty miles distant, meeting there with Father Zenos H. Gurley and family at Yellowstone, and then with the branch called Zarahemla. Here they witnessed most interesting and convincing evidences that they were the Lord's people, for the love of Christ, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit were plainly manifest among them. Here they learned further of the wonderful manner in which the Lord had blessed and guided them in respect to the work of the reorganization, and the coming in the near future of Joseph, the son of Joseph, to be the president of the church.

Soon after their return home, Blair went to Amboy and there learned of the remarkable healing of Brother Jotham T. Barrett under the administration of Elders Gurley and Briggs when on their way to his place. Blair knew he had been a great sufferer from bronchial consumption for a long time. He had been pronounced beyond all help by his physicians, but when these young elders called upon him, and by his request prayed for him and his family, it was revealed by the Holy Spirit that the brother would be fully restored; whereupon they administered to him according to the order of the church and he soon recovered excellent health, lived

many years thereafter, and died from other causes, triumphant in the faith.

June 10 and 11, 1859, a conference was held in a schoolhouse near Edwin Cadwell's, Amboy, Illinois with Elder Z. H. Gurley presiding. William Marks, president of the High Council and of the stake at Nauvoo up to the death of Joseph the Seer, met with them the first time. He came with Brethren Aldrich and Gaylord at their urgent request, though doubtfully and reluctantly. But before the close of the first days exercises, which were devoted to prayer and testimony, and partaking of the sacrament, the Lord gave him convincing and satisfactory evidence by His spirit, that the work they were then engaged in had his divine approval.

The gifts abounded with the little congregation in a very notable manner. The gift of tongues was given to the little twelve year old daughter of C.G. Lanphear, and she arose and spoke therein as the spirit gave utterance. A young married sister, Helen Pomeroy, a stranger to Brother Marks, arose under the power of the Spirit, walked down the aisle, and coming directly in from of him, he then sitting in the stand with Elder Gurley, lifting her hands she said to him. "Thus saith the Lord; O thou man of God! In times past thou hast sat with my servant Joseph the Seer; and in times near to come thou shalt sit in council with his son. When I called my servant Joseph he was a lone tree; but when I call his son, he shall be as one of a forest."

Upon this Brother Marks arose, weeping with joy and gladness, and said, "This manifestation I know is by the Spirit of God. It is the same Spirit the faithful Saints ever enjoyed when I first received the gospel in the state of New York, and which we also enjoyed in Kirtland, Missouri, and at Nauvoo.

By what authority did the reorganization begin? It was supported by the blessing of the Holy Spirit in many ways. We live in a time when we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let us always put our trust in that Spirit that leads us to do good.

Preach Nothing But Repentance

Elder Tom Dooley of Independence, Missouri was introduced to us as a servant of Jesus Christ whose ministry has been shared with the Rolfes and others present on the Navajo reservation for years and whose good ministry we could anticipate. Brother Tom spoke declaring he only had the words of Jesus Christ who, while he was perfect, said, "Don't count me good. Only the Father in heaven is perfect." For himself, he said, "We try, and we hope that we can endure to the end."

He thanked us for our prayers referring to the death of Angie, his wife, whose funeral was held just a week ago yesterday. "We were close, at least. I have a habit of asking for your prayers before I talk, and I really need them today. I ask because I have a lot of faith in prayer. As my old Daddy used to say, 'There is more power in prayer than anything this earth has to offer - atom bombs, or anything else', and I believe that with all my heart. But, you know, when you go through these sorrows and trials it's not easy; and it hasn't been easy for me." Then he said, wistfully, "Now, I'm complaining!" and turned to read a scripture.

"I'm going to read a scripture you have heard many times, but you know what? We can't listen to it enough and we can't read it enough. It's from James." Brother Dooley read James 1:12-27. It

is James' admonition to everyone to be doers of the word and not hearers only. The Apostle does not allow us to blame God or others for our sinning, but charges us to resist temptation, and not be drawn away of our own lusts, for sin brings death. It is in Jesus that one finds the "perfect law of liberty" into which we should all look. James declares that one who seems religious but bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, "this man's religion is vain." He defines pure religion and undefiled as, "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the vices of the world." (Please read the entire scripture for yourself.) Brother Dooley chose to read other scriptures that related to repentance, the subject about which he wished to speak. (As he reads, Brother Dooley often repeats words or inserts phrases he wishes to emphasize. Those repeated words and phrases I have placed in parentheses).

Isaiah 55:7-9. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly (abundantly) pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, (thank the Lord) and my thoughts than your thoughts."

From Second Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long (long) suffering, (Thank the Lord! Long suffering, folks. We would all be in trouble if He wasn't!) to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all (all) should come to repentance." "And that all takes in everybody in this whole wide world," our speaker asserted positively. James 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

1 John 1:6-7. 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, (and walk in darkness), we lie, and do not the truth; but (but) if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' "That is the most marvelous scripture that could ever be written, because, folks, we all have a tendency to walk in the dark. On the other hand, If we walk in that light and have fellowship one with the other, as we are doing today, we are going to accomplish something for the Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were noted as the two greatest men who ever walked on this earth. "They both gave their life for the work. They were about the most humble, about the most submissive men that I can ever read about." Matthew 3:41-44 tells the story of Jesus coming to John to be baptized, "but John refused him saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and why comest thou to me? (You've got this all mixed up, Jesus. It should be the other way around! No! No! Jesus was never wrong.) Jesus answered him, 'Suffer me to be baptized of thee, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.' But John got the message, folks. John was obedient. "And John went down into the water and baptized him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way out of the water; and John saw, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Jesus. And lo, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.' Why was God so well pleased with His Only Begotten Son? Because His Only Begotten Son was obedient then, before and after, brothers and sisters, and that's our calling - to be obedient.

"I can't talk about repentance until I talk a little bit about

obedience; because you can't repent without being obedient. You have to be obedient to repent. It all goes together." Our speaker turned to Matthew 3:27-29 and read of John the Baptist's ministry saying, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For I am he who was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths straight.' Folks, John the Baptist was obedient, too!

From Matthew 11 Brother Dooley read of John being in prison and commented, "John had said the wrong thing at the wrong time, but the right time at the right time for God Almighty. We have to be careful about that. I want to say the right thing at the right time for God. I don't want the worry about saying the wrong thing to my fellow man. If it's pleasing to my God, I want to say it, regardless of the consequences.

"John the Baptist was a powerful man. Maybe he wasn't much to look at, but, folks, he was the second in command on this earth, as far as I am concerned. You need to remember that this man was full of the Holy Ghost even in his mother's womb. It was John who saw Jesus coming, and he says, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' He recognized who Christ was - the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. My! How much opposition was John getting about that time? It was tremendous, folks! That's not all written down, but he was getting all kinds of opposition. John knew that he was going to have his head chopped off. Everybody had let him know that. So he sent two of his disciples over there to ask, 'Are you the Christ, or should we look for another?'

"Why, he knew who Christ was! But Christ didn't snap his suspenders and say, 'Why, I am the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. I'm the one! I'm the guy! I'm Him!' No. He said, 'You go back and tell John, Aren't the blind seeing and the lame walking and the evil spirits being cast out? All of these kinds of miracles are happening'. And brothers and sisters, John got the message. Yes, he lost his head, but he didn't lose his life. And, you know, I love this, 'And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitude concerning John '- (If you don't think that Jesus was feeling bad! But He knew who John was and He knew who He was.) 'What went ye out into the wilderness to see? Was it a reed shaken with the wind? And they answered him, No. And he said, But what went ye out for to see? Was it a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft raiment are in king's houses. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.'

"John prepared the way for Jesus Christ. It was hard preparation, but he did it by the power of the Holy Ghost that was in him. And I'm going to tell you, folks, this is what Jesus thought about when he said, 'For this is the one of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way for thee. Verily, I say unto you, (Now listen! I hope you have read this over and over. I hope I am not saying anything new, but I hope it comes with so much force and power that you will understand it more clear and perfect.) 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.' And I think Christ was talking about himself first and John the Baptist second, and that's my interpretation on that; but folks, John wasn't too much to look at, really, but when God looked upon him, he looked upon him with all the power, the beauties and the glories of heaven; and yet, look how he ended up. How you end up doesn't mean much. Are you faithful? Are you enduring? Have you repented? Are you overcoming? It's these that count.

Preach Nothing Except

“You know, I had an experience six days after the September the eleventh tragedy at the world trade centers and the pentagon. I had come home from my missionary corps meeting on Monday. I sat down in my chair, and like I do a lot of times, I picked up the Book of Mormon and opened it at random. It opened up to Mosiah, and I started reading at the eleventh chapter, ninety seventh verse. I had done that lots of times in my life.” Brother Tom read of King Mosiah giving Alma power to establish churches and ordain priests and teachers over the churches. Because there were too many people to be governed by one person and too many to hear in one assembly, they established different places of assembly they called churches, where all the priests and teachers taught the word of God as Alma taught them.

“When I came to this hundred and first verse, ‘For there was nothing’, and folks when I hit that word, nothing, ‘Nothing preached in all the churches (Nothing preached in all the churches, he repeated) except repentance and faith in God’, I tell you, a bolt of lightening couldn’t have hit me any harder. I had read that before. I knew in the beginning of the Restoration, we were commanded to preach nothing but repentance to this untoward generation. I knew all of that, but when I read these words, folks, you could have hit me with a two by four and it wouldn’t have hit any harder. It really came with power. I wish I could put that over. And I went over to Angie and I told her, ‘Angie, I had an experience right now, and it was a powerful experience.’ I says, ‘It says nothing! Nothing! You don’t preach anything - nothing except repentance and faith in God.’ And you know, I kept telling her this all night. And she says, ‘You know, I won’t be worth two cents in the morning.’ And she wasn’t. But folks, I had to keep reviewing it, and reviewing it. It came with such power and such force!.

“Just a few days after that, Bill Davies came into the shop real excited, and you know Bill can get excited sometimes, and he says, ‘Tom, Tom. God told me to come in here and you would tell me what to preach!’ And I said, ‘Yeah, Bill. All I can tell you is my experience, and that’s it!’ ‘That’s what I am supposed to preach!’ Bill nodded, and He did. I was there. But he focused it on Bill first. Then he focused it on the congregation next. Folks, we have got to focus it on this guy, ourselves, first. I’ve got to focus it on Tom first, and then I can try to help other people repent.

“You know, I have a long way to go, folks. I’m not delivered. Right now, I’m kind of like a fellow told me the other day. God ought to have a policy, when he takes a team, the man and wife, He ought to have a policy to take them both. I’m in full agreement with that. I feel alone. I have never had anything like this in my life. I am really sad. Rob and Lynda asked me, ‘Do you think you can go up there that quick, because you know, we planned this way back at Pinion (Navajo Reunion). I said, ‘Well if Angie was here, she would say, ‘Go! We’re Gonna Go!’ So I had to say, ‘Yes!’ This was her life, folks. This was why I loved her so much. She loved the Lord, Jesus Christ with all of her might, mind and strength.”

Charity is the Secret

Our speaker then shared a testimony of his life. “I was drafted into the military a long time ago. (It seems like yesterday, you know. Where did all the time go?) When I went in, I had my neighbor tell me, ‘Tom, just because you belong to the church of Jesus Christ, don’t think those bullets are going to go around you.’

“You know, I wasn’t raised that way. I was raised on the Hebrew children and the fiery furnace, on Daniel in the lion’s den, on the Red Sea experience. I was raised on those things and I believed

them, and that made him feel bad. He was trying to be nice - I guess, but I had several people tell me those kinds of things, and that wasn’t exactly building my faith.

“So I went to the army, and I went clear to the front lines, and I shouldn’t be here. My bunker was just like a ship on a great big sea. It was bobbing around out there, and all these mortars were coming in and all these artilleries. But I am going to make a long story short. “One day I was writing a letter to my mother. I got a brand new box of airmail stationery, envelopes on one end, writing paper on the other. I was going right along writing this letter when all of a sudden, bang, here comes that slug in there and just tore that letter all to pieces. Before I straightened up the paper, I got up on my feet and thanked God that He spared me so that bullet didn’t hit me.

“I often wondered what I would do if something like that happened. I had been in a lot of jams, and it seems like if the right thing has been instilled in you, just like that prayer, you come out with it later on. When Mom and Dad puts it there, you come out with it. When God puts it there, you come out with it. You’ve got to be obedient to what you have been taught. That’s why it’s so important to stay in the scriptures all of the time. We should constantly study. “Oh, I have studied that before!” But if you have, you’ll find something there like the kids say, ‘that’s gooder!’

“Anyhow, I sent this letter home to my mother, and I told the Lord when I was over there, ‘Lord, if you will take me back home, I will serve you to the end of my days. I mean, Lord, You can depend on me!’” And I meant that; but when I got home, an Elder in the church came up to me, an older man, and he says, ‘Tom, I want to tell you something. You should have never sent that letter home to your mother.’ That was just like lightening - just like dynamite. I was only about twenty-two years old, twenty one. And I said, ‘I want to tell you, brother, I sent that letter home to my mother to let her know that God was taking care of her son.’ He got mad.

“Well, I had opportunity to talk to this other man about the bullets going around me. He was over at the house one day, and I said, ‘Bud, you told me those bullets wouldn’t go around me. You were right. They hit me and didn’t bother me!’ He went home mad! Folks, I wouldn’t do that today because that’s not the right approach. We have to approach in the spirit of love and charity. But anyhow, I don’t know what I expected, but I expected to find Zion. I expected the people who had made a covenant with the Lord - a genuine covenant like I had, and I meant it. I was going to serve the Lord. I was going to keep His commandments. I was going to do all these things. When you do that, old Satan’s really coming at you. He sure does, if you really mean it. So, I decided that all these people were a bunch of hypocrites. I wasn’t going to go to church. You know. I was blaming God. No, I was blaming the people. No, what was I blaming? I wasn’t justified in it, folks, really. For fifteen years, I never darkened the door of the church, and I meant I’d never go back there again! Never! Never! Well, when you say those kinds of things, God really does things. So -

“My Dad and I were closer than brothers. I mean, we were really close. We did everything together from the time I was a little thing. He took sick. He had a cancer right on the back of his neck. You could put your whole fist in it and never touch sides. He never lost consciousness. Never lost his mind. The Lord blessed him. The cancer ate into a blood vessel and the blood was flowing fast. I prayed. The blood stopped flowing just like you had turned off a faucet. He looked at me and said, ‘Tom, why are you keeping me here? I’m ready to go home. I’ve got a lot of things I want to talk over with Jesus. You don’t know the answers and nobody else

knows the answers, but Jesus knows the answers.' He was ready to go, but I wasn't ready to let him go.

"You know, he called me over to the bedside. Remember now, I hadn't been to church in quite a long time - about fifteen years. He said, 'Tom, I've got a request.' I said, 'Sure, Dad. Anything. Anything you want, I'll do it. We need a blessing. We need a healing here. Dad says, 'I want you to go back to church.' 'Sure, Dad, sure!' and he knew I would. I walked away from the bed, and he said, 'Wait a minute. Come back here.' He wasn't too far from leaving us at that time. I didn't know it, but he says, 'I've got another request.' I said, 'What is it Dad. Sure, anything.' He says, 'When you go back to church, I want you to be sure and take a whole bushel basket full of charity with you, because you will need every speck of it.'

"You know, brothers and sisters, when I keep my charity, I'm a complete success for Jesus Christ. When I lose my charity, I'm a total failure, and I want you to know that. That's the secret to the work of the Kingdom of God. If we have that kind of unselfish, giving kind of love where you are ready to give Jesus Christ and all you've got to everybody; when you want this gospel to go forth in so much power and so much assurance, folks, we will begin to be on the road to the Kingdom for sure.

Repentance is For All People

Brother Tom said he wanted to read some favorite scriptures from the Book of Mormon pertaining to repentance. He read from Alma 3:56, 'Repent, repent, for the Lord God hath spoken it. Behold he sendeth an invitation unto all men; (You know sometimes we use such scriptures as, 'Don't cast your pearls before swine, and we back off, but when Jesus says "all men", He means everybody. You'll be able to tell maybe a little while later whether they are swine, or something else, but we are not very good farmers sometime. We have a difficult time telling the difference between swine and sheep in the beginning. Really, we do, and this is so important,) for the arms of mercy are extended toward them, and he saith, Repent, and I will receive you. (Sure thing!) Yea, he saith, come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and waters of life freely; ...' And then, there's one over here on 3:85, 'And now I say unto you, that this is the order after which I am called; yea, to preach unto my beloved brethren; yea, and everyone that dwelleth in the land; yea, to preach unto all, both old and young, both bond and free (Old and young, bond and free! Who are you supposed to preach to? Old and young, bond and free - that takes them all in, folks.) I say unto you, the aged (That's got me in there.) and also the middle aged, (That kind of takes care of some of us.) and the rising generation, (That takes care of quite a few here.) Yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and; be born again; ...' Folks, we go down into the waters of baptism. That's a commandment.

Faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, eternal judgment. A lot of times we feel like when we go down into the waters of baptism, we're perfect. No. You go down into the waters of baptism and you are a new creature. You are not a perfect creature, because there remains in each and every one of us the temptation of sin, and that's why this doctrine of repentance, I think is the greatest piece of work God could ever give us. It's the greatest element that God could ever give his people, that if you really, truly repent from your heart, God really and truly forgives you and you can genuinely feel that forgiveness. Not only will you feel it, you will recognize it in your life; and as you walk through life, you will appreciate that thing called repentance more fully, because you will

experience something that is mighty marvelous.

Humility The Key

Brother Dooley read beginning at Mosiah 2:13 'Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; (Folks, that's where you begin. You can't do anything until you do that.) Believe that he has all wisdom and all power, both in heaven and earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend. (I wish I did comprehend a little more! With my finite mind, I don't comprehend much compared to God.) And again; believe that ye must repent of your sins, (Believe that you must, must, must repent of your sins and forsake them, (You can't kid Him! You can't fool Him. It's impossible!) and humble yourselves (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.' "We read a little bit of that in James. It's all the way through the scriptures. Why call me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I tell you to do?"

"Folks, it's so important for us to do it! You know, this thing called humility is so important. You know that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were so humble, but I don't think it was any easier for them to be humble that it is for us. In the Book of Mormon it says if we fast and pray, it causes one to be firmer and firmer in the faith and stronger and stronger in humility, and, brothers and sisters, faith and humility are the two elements it takes to serve God then and now; and God recognizes that kind of a heart, a faithful and humble heart. That's what we've got to work on, folks. It might not take you a real long way in the world, fame, fortune, prestige, and all that, but it will take you to the same glory that John the Baptist received. And there wasn't any higher glory than that of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist, and there's no glory on this earth that compares with that glory! I'll guarantee you that. Folks, its so important that we fix our eyes on Jesus Christ and don't take it off. "Remember when Elisha wanted the mantle and a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah. Remember Elijah told him, 'You've got to keep me in your sight. Don't take your eyes off of me. Keep me right there. Keep looking at me, because, if you don't, you won't get the double portion. You won't get my mantle. You know what happened. Elisha followed him around like a little puppy dog everywhere he went. Finally that fiery chariot! Elijah went to heaven, and Elisha saw him and got a double portion and he got the mantle of Elijah. Folks. That's a type of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Elijah, and we've got to focus on him all the time, and when we do, we receive a double portion.

"We receive the mantle of Almighty God, and I tell you, folks, that mantle is the fire and the gift of the Holy Ghost. And there's no power in the whole world that compares to that Holy Ghost. It's as strong as the Father and the Son. Remember that. When you think about the Holy Ghost that you have received under the hands of the Elders in confirmation, you have the power of the Father and the Son, and I'll guarantee you, God's Restored church hasn't even scratched the surface of that power yet. But it's very much available, and we need it! We need it! We need it! We talk about the endowment. Yes, that is what I am talking about, folks, but it's not going to come until we become a totally repentant people.

"You know, there was a fellow by the name of Nephi, the son of Helaman, and I want to tell you something about this son of Helaman. He really labored with the people. He preached repentance. He told them exactly what was going to happen to them." Brother Dooley recounted the Book of Mormon story from Helaman

3 of how this Nephi was charging the people to repent or face the judgments of the Lord. In describing the extent of their wickedness, he told them their chief judge had been murdered on his throne. The five men sent to check out his story, when they found it to be true, fainted because that meant that everything else that Nephi had said would come to pass, and that would be a disaster. Nephi told the people how to determine that the King's own brother had murdered the king, "because he wanted place and position and prestige. He wanted to be in power. Of course, that's the problem today. Everyone wants to be in power. Jesus Christ didn't have that kind of spirit." (Please read the whole story for yourself.) Even with all of the miracles, the people still didn't believe Nephi's message.

"This man, Nephi, was so faithful, true and obedient to God, but he was going home downtrodden, discouraged, absolutely finished. He thought he was a total failure, and in the eyes of man, he was at that point. It didn't seem like he got much accomplished, but look what God thought of him! Do you know what happened? God began to talk to him on the road back to the house. He stopped him in his tracks." Our speaker found the story in Helaman 3 and began reading at verse 114. While Nephi was pondering in his heart the wickedness of his people, a voice spoke, calling him blessed because he had, "with unweariness declared the word which I have given unto thee, unto this people." Brother Tom repeated unweariness three times as he emphasized that the flesh wants to get weary, and Jesus knows what it is to get weary. Brother Tom referred to his experience with the woman at the well. "He was thirsty. Folks, he was flesh! If we could just put ourselves in Jesus' place, it was horrible on Him. So God cautions us over and over not to get weary in well doing."

Further, the Lord commended Nephi because he had not feared the people nor sought to preserve his own life. For his faithfulness, and unweariness in keeping the Lord's commandments, the Lord promised to bless him forever, to make him mighty in word and deed, in faith and in works, even to do all things that he asked, for, said the Lord, "thou (Just see how much faith and trust God put in Nephi.) Thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will." (Are we like that folks? Do we ask anything that is contrary to God's will? We won't if we walk in the Spirit.) 'Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare (Where is he going to declare it? Who is to listen in on this? Who was eavesdropping? He will tell you.) Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels (Angels, angels, folks! He wanted a confirmation of what He was telling Nephi.) that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction according to the wickedness of this people. Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever you shall seal on earth, shall be sealed in heaven; (Do you know that same power was given to the men in the early days of this church? It sure was.) and thus, if you shall say unto this temple, It shall be rent in twain, it shall be be rent in twain. And if you shall say unto this mountain, be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass. And now, behold, I command you that ye shall go and declare to this people (He had already been there, but with this kind of a promise, he was ready to go again. He was strengthened and quickened by the power of God. I think he was pretty filled by this time.

"Jesus said at the well, I have food you know nothing about. Did anybody bring him a hamburger from McDonalds or Walmart or something? No, folks, he was filled with the power of heaven.) 'Thus saith the Lord God, who is Almighty, except you repent, ye

shall be smitten, even unto destruction.' "Well, he went, and they didn't repent. And he had to call a famine on the people; and they did repent for a season and identified him as a prophet of God.

A Marvelous Work and a Wonder

"We have talked about the marvelous work and a wonder. Folks, this is a marvelous work and a wonder, and the promise ahead is that it is going to be more marvelous and more wonderful. We have to have that kind of hope and that kind of trust in Jesus Christ that Nephi had. You ask people today, 'Have you got faith?' 'Yeah, I've got faith.' 'Have you got hope? What is this you have hope in?' And they may have hesitated just a second or two. What is it you hope in? But you know what the seventh chapter of Moroni says? You have hope in the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And you can't have faith and hope without having charity. It absolutely says that in black and white. So forget about your faith and forget about your hope. It's just so much stuff unless you kind of season it with charity.

"And then, Brothers and sisters. It really works, and you've really got something to hold on to. Brother Tom read a favorite scripture of Angie's from Proverbs 6:16, "These six things doth the Lord hate; (Do you think the Lord hates? Yes, He does.) yea, seven are an abomination unto him; a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and (here's the one she always came down on because she could see it all over) he that soweth discord among brethren.' Sometimes we kind of justify ourselves. We don't drink. We're not a drunkard, and we don't commit adultery and we don't murder. So, you know, we've got all those "we don'ts", but folks, we forget about those secret sins like envy and jealousy and strife and contention and we've got to get over those childish things, as Paul would say. We need to get over it!

Who Is The Greatest?

"I want to close with this, Matthew 18:1, the account of the disciples concern about who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. (The same spirit is going down to our day. So sad!) 'Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Verily, ... Except ye become converted, and become as a little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' You see what it takes? It takes humility. You want to get humility? Fast and pray. Folks, God said to fast. That's where it's meaningful in our lives. God said to do it, and it's powerful, folks. It's powerful.

"Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He repeated again. My desire is that we will focus on the one that counts. That's Jesus Christ. I have a hard time knowing how to pray for enemies. Jesus did. He even prayed for those that were running a spear into him and driving nails in his hands and feet and putting thorns on his head. Folks, he could look down and said, 'Forgive them, Father. They know not what they do.'

"That's the kind of heart we are supposed to get. You know when we do, we will see things begin to roll forth. They were really stoning Stephen. He was really hurting. The more he preached Jesus, the more stones they threw at him. And the more he told about that heavenly place, the more stones they threw at him. Folks, we may have that, not in literal stones, but I've experienced it with opposition. Can't worry about that. Stephen didn't. 'Lay this not to their charge.' That's the kind of hearts that we are working on - that

Jesus Christ heart.

“Thank you again for your love. I love each and every one of you, for that’s my business - that’s your business, and maybe we can get together again sometime. God Bless you!”

As a parting testimony, Brother Tom said that when Brother Knotts asked the congregation to sing, “My God, How Wonderful Thou Art”, he knew the Spirit was here. “Angie would tell you that’s my favorite hymn,” he said, and with deep emotion recited the words, “My God, how wonderful thou art. Thy majesty how bright. How glorious is thy mercy seat in depths of burning light. Folks, when you sang that this morning, it kind of let me know that God was here.”

When Good Is Called Evil and Evil Good

Brother Rodney Bastow chose Romans 14:16-19 to introduce his sermon September 22 - “Let not then your good be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

Rodney opened with an emotional greeting during which he affirmed that the week had been good with blessings, both spiritual and physical, for which he felt unworthy and with many prayers answered for which he was thankful. “I am not really worthy a lot of times of the love that God shows me, but I’m sure glad he does,” he commented.

He said that thoughts and messages of what he was sure God wanted him to say kept going through his mind all week; but when he started to write them down so he would have them before him to present to us, the words just would not go together right. “I was writing volumes, and I had so many things that I thought would be very appropriate to share, but for some reason that I am not sure I can understand, the words just wouldn’t fit together and things just wouldn’t tie in like I thought they should.” After working until late, he went to bed not knowing what he would preach and so was restless. “Because for me, it’s hard to sleep when you don’t know what you are going to say” he confessed. “And I suppose that results from a lack of faith on my part, because if I truly have a calling - if I really am a part of God’s Priesthood, then I should know, and I should be confident that the Lord will provide the words that I should say, just as He has before. And I believe it is through the power of His Holy Spirit that I am blessed and that we are blessed, and I believe that the praise that we may have and any of the glory that there might be should be to our Heavenly Father for providing us with that blessing.” It was morning when Brother Bastow’s restlessness awakened Debbie, and it was her words to him that let him know what he needed to say today.

“You know, sometimes it’s really hard to admit how weak you are. I appreciated very much the ministry that our Brother Mike gave a couple of weeks ago, and I have never found the right opportunity to express to him my gratitude for that day. Mike expressed to us some of the problems that he had been facing. You see, I thought it was only me. I thought I was the only one that ever had any problems, and like him, I have felt a strong need for administration to help me with some of the outside influences that

sometimes try to control my life. I have always been one who has tried to deal with things on my own, and it doesn’t seem that I turn to my heavenly Father a lot of times until I have suffered awhile. I don’t know why that is, because I know that in times when I need answers, if I would turn to him and ask for administration, I would be blessed. I would be blessed with peace that only His holy Spirit can give to us.”

“I have shared with you before from a devotional that I have used, and I would like to share with you again from this devotional. I hesitate to bring to you words from someone else, but I feel like this week I was led to this message. It has inspired me and it kind of says a little bit of what I want to say.” Rodney said he had been using other devotional materials for a time but this week, “I came across this devotional entitled “Evil Good and Good Evil”. It refers to a scripture from Isaiah 5:20 which says, “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!” And it says it’s Satan’s practice to convince people that what God calls good is actually evil and what God declares evil is in fact good.

“Satan persuaded Adam and Eve that their disobedience rather than their obedience would guarantee a full life. They believed him and immediately began to experience sin’s consequences. Despite the absurdity of Satan’s logic, he continues to deceive people into doubting what God has clearly said. King Saul sought Samuel’s affirmation for the sacrifice he had offered even though he had acted in direct disobedience to God’s command. Ananias and Sapphira expected praise from the early church though they were blatantly lying. The Amalekite soldier sought David’s gratitude for killing Saul, God’s anointed king. We, too, will face the temptation to call something good that God has declared wicked. We may be persuaded that we can accomplish more good by lying than by telling the truth. We may claim that we are mobilizing Christians to pray for someone in sin when, in fact, we are spreading gossip. We may assert that we are following God’s will in our job, when, in fact, we are striving to pursue our own ambitions.

“We will also be tempted to call evil that which God declares is good. God says it is good to love our enemies, yet we might decide our task is to hold them responsible for their actions. It is so important to hold ourselves accountable to God’s word. God does not need us to find exceptions for His command. He requires our obedience.”

“Of course, that doesn’t apply to any of us.” Brother Bastow said, clearly meaning that it does. “It seems a lot of times when I have been treated unfairly, I try to find a way to get even or to get revenge, or whatever you want to call it. And I feel like I can justify it because of what has happened to me; but it’s not right, and it’s not God’s will. I think about the tragedy of September 11. That was really a sad day for our country and for us, and I don’t understand how men could be deceived into thinking that God wanted them to take the lives and to hurt so many people, and do it in His name. But it’s my understanding that’s why they did what they did. And, you know, I have thought, if we are really a Christian nation, why do we want to retaliate?”

“Last summer, down around Maryville, there is a little town called Conception Junction. When I first heard the name of that town, it was from a guy that lived there that was at Graceland when I was. I thought he was making a joke. I didn’t believe that there could be such a place, but there is. I don’t know a lot about the place, but Debbie has been there and has visited the monastery and the print shop, and she probably knows more about it than I do. All I

know is that there is a group of men who have dedicated their lives to God. And they have pulled themselves away from the world. They live there, they spend much time in prayer, and they spend time trying to serve the Lord. One of the monks there was called Brother Damien. Brother Damien was well known in the area for being able to predict the weather. Each year, you know, people would say, 'What has Brother Damien predicted?' Well, this summer, for some unknown reason, this guy came up, walked into the chapel and opened fire. He killed Brother Damien and another brother and injured some others, then he took his own life. It doesn't make sense! Try to understand why someone would do something like that!

"What I think, though, was really important was the monks' response to this incident. The man that did this terrible thing hadn't been in contact with his family for a number of years. He had no close friends. Whether he was angry at the Catholic church, no one really knew. But the monks offered to do his funeral service, and I thought, WOW! isn't that incredible? And it touched me to think that they could be living so close to God that they could be able to forgive someone for taking away their loved ones and shattering the quietness and peacefulness of their lives. And I wished that I could be that good. I wished that I could be that close to God. It would have been very easy for them to have justified, 'We are not going to have anything to do with this guy. We are not going to forgive him for what he has done!' But they didn't choose to return evil for evil. Instead they chose to return good for something evil that had been done.

"This week, as many of you know, was the day that was set aside to 'Meet you at the pole.'" I suppose most of you know what that means. It's the day the students get together and usually meet around the flag pole, and they pray for others and pray for their school. This has gone on at Burlington Jct. and at West Nodaway for several years. Last year especially, I thought about staying away, and I guess the way I was going to justify it - well, there were possibly two ways. One is that it's difficult for me to pray in public because I'm always afraid that I won't know what to say, and then I won't say the right things, and that's part of my problem with it. The other part of my problem with it was that it had become so popular at our school that kids were doing it to be popular. Sounds weird, doesn't? But they were. It was the in thing to do, and I thought maybe it had lost a little of what had made it special.

"When it came up this year, I really didn't know how to deal with that. I didn't know what to think; so I spent some time praying about it. And the answer I received was that my prayer should be short and simple, because there would be others who would cover the things I wouldn't be able to think of, and that it would be a good thing for me to be there. So I made a special point to get there that morning. They give you an incentive, because they give juice and donuts, and that's a good reason to get up early and get there; and I think that's what draws some of the kids. And while we were waiting - they usually wait until all of the busses get in - you know there is a big group of kids there, I'm talking to some of the teachers gathered there, too. We are thinking, 'Are all these kids really sincere about doing this, or are they just here for the juice and the donuts?' And a teacher said, 'Well, at least they will be exposed to Jesus Christ.' And I thought, 'Good point.' We waited. And so it finally came to the time. They delay it as long as possible so they can get out of as much class time as possible; but finally we joined hands, and I tell you, folks, we are going to have to get a bigger yard down there. Our flag pole is out between the school and the

highway, and we were almost on the highway. There were 130 people joined around that flag pole.

"We only have a high school of probably a hundred and twenty kids. Of course, we had some elementary and some teachers, but we had a lot of people there. And it was such a good feeling to be there and to hear those prayers and the lessons. And I was really glad that God had led me to be there this morning. And, you know, I had a good day, and part of it was because the principal had a lot of trouble that day, and I'm thinking, 'I'm glad I'm not in her job.' That always makes me feel a little better, but it was a really good day.

"Something else that was really special about this was not only were both the elementary and the high school principals there, but our superintendent was there. I was really glad to see that, because I have worked for some superintendents who would not only have not been there, but they would have discouraged this. I talked to my superintendent later about this and he says, 'You know, that probably wasn't legal. Probably we could be taken to court about doing that, but, he said, 'To me, it's worth it.' He said he really liked being there. You know, that means something to me to be able to work for someone who has that kind of belief in Jesus and is not afraid to show it. You know, when I walked away from the pole, I thought about how important it was for me and for the others who had gathered there to do good and to obey God's commandments because we had been there this morning; and because we had been there, there were certain expectations for us because we had claimed to have a relationship with Jesus.

We choose to do good or we choose to do evil. What will our choice be today? At the pole there were several scriptures that were read. One of them that hit a chord with me was this one from Second Chronicles, seventh Chapter, 14th verse. "If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

"We claim here this morning to have taken upon us the name of Jesus Christ, and because we are here this morning and because we are members of this church, we are recognized by others, and there is a certain standard that they hold us to and because of that, it is important that we choose to do good rather than to do evil and try to justify our actions. We are going to make mistakes. We all do; but God will forgive us.

"Another thing that was mentioned at the pole, was to pray for peace, not peace as in the war, but peace in our hearts. We were told not to worry and not to worry about the things of the world. We were told that we should follow God, and He will take care of our needs. God wants us to love him and he wants us to love those around us. We have no time for anger or hatred. We must not find exceptions to His commandments. As we make our choices today, and in the days ahead, I hope we will choose to do right.

"In closing, I have a scripture from Doctrine and Covenants, the 140th section, 5 c&d. 'The work of preparation and the perfection of my saints go forward slowly, and Zion's conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies; but my word shall not fail, neither will my promises, for the foundation of the Lord standeth sure.'"

Ministry of Music Brings Joy

As is our custom, when there is a fifth Sunday in a month, we worship with the ministry of music shared by all ages of the congregation. Our Pastor was in charge of this service and began by reminding us that this is a service of worship and we should not applaud, though we would feel like doing so. In this service all the praise was to go to God and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Our opening song was “Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth, How Can I Keep From Singing!” After the invocation, Steven Smith sang of the joy that comes with the cleansing and refreshing power of the Holy Spirit. Lynda Rolfe followed with the assurance that “He will bear you up on eagle’s wings and hold you in the palm of his hand.” The offering was received as Cessaries played, “As a deer panteth for the water, so my soul panteth after Thee.” Jazymn and Cessaries then played a piano duet honoring Jesus Christ, His birth and His mission, “Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming”.

Jerry Slayton had prepared copies of “The Spirit of God Like A Fire is Burning” in German, and after giving some instruction on the pronunciation of the words, led the congregation in singing that beloved song in the language he loves and teaches at Graceland U. Michael Jordison accompanied us all on his guitar as we sang. At the close of the singing, Jerry asked Brother George Myers to stand and be honored as one who had served his country along with others who had been honored at a previous service.

Michael Jordison then sang of the long night one had journeyed during a raging storm on the sea thinking he was alone but finding that God was watching. Through faith alone, now, though the ship is battered and the sails are torn, the anchor holds in spite of the storm. Alan and Cara Smith followed with “I heard the Voice of Jesus Say, Come Unto Me and Rest.”

Rob Rolfe sang the ballad of Job introducing it with a few notes about the book and how the song had taken him back to read the scripture again. His characterization of the Devil with his efforts to bring Job to curse God and God’s continued affirmation of Job, “Whatever is righteous he’s anxious to heed” were powerful incentives for us to follow after the manner of Job.

The Galusha trio, Aquila on the guitar and Jazmyn and Gabel with their violins played Bach’s “Minuet 2”.

Barbra Jordison introduced her number by commenting that she had a lot of time recently to think about what God wants us to leave church with and with a tribute to how important what happens in our homes is to what we are. In her home, she said, they were taught that their first response to any need was to go to the Lord. She told of a situation in which she faced a man angered by the actions of one who had raped his mother and now wished the man was dead. Barbra started to walk away then realized that was not the thing to do. So she asked the Lord what she should say and was instructed to bring up the name of Jesus. She remembered that the success or failure of this work belongs to Jesus, and we are to just mind our own business. She told the man that Jesus tells us we don’t have to like the man, but we have to love him. Just the mention of Jesus changed the man’s mind. He had a gun and had intended to use it to kill. The name of Jesus changed his mind.

Barbra’s song spoke of the difficulty walking in shifting sand, followed by the plea, “Please help me raise my hand so you can pick me up”. As the storms come and go, her song continued, Lord, teach

me to stay “safe inside your arms. Like a child, keep me warm.”

Brother Rolfe commented at the close of the service that he thought we might ought to take the congregation on the road to minister to others with the talent God has placed with us. He expressed special gratitude for having the privilege of being where he could see the response on the faces of the people as each offering was made.

The service closed with the hymn, “Sent forth by God’s blessing, our true faith confessing, the people of God from His dwelling take leave. The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended the fruits of this service in all who believe,” and a benediction offered by Mike Jordison.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
Mount Ayr Restoration Branch
607 E. Madison St.
Mount Ayr, IA 50854

News and Notes

Congregational Directory Available

A Congregational directory, current Sept. 2002, is available. An effort has been made to make the directory complete with current address and telephone numbers. If you have not yet received yours, you may pick one up at the church or call Mildred Smith, 641 784 7659. If you find errors that need correcting, please call Mildred with the correction.

Some corrections are already noted, and have been made on some copies, but not on all:

Linda and Jim Barber's telephone number is 660-425-3849.

Frances Parker is not nearly 70.

Mark Campbell's box number is 703.

Heidi Winkler's name is spelled Heidi.

Roger Yu's number is 5959.

JoJo is JoJo Chu, Graceland U, Box 956, Tel. 641 784 5976.

Maggie Huang, Graceland U, Box 772, Tel. 641 784 5947.

Saints Participate in Singspiration

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ, Mt. Ayr Restoration Branch provided about one fourth of the participants in the Ringgold County Ministerial Association's pot luck picnic and singspiration held at Judge Lewis Park the afternoon of September 8, 2002.

Special numbers provided by our group began with Rob Rolfe's scriptural ballad, the story of Balaam and his talking donkey. It was followed, after a period of community singing and presentations, by "Just A Little Talk with Jesus" sung by a male quartet composed of Rob Rolfe, Mike Jordison and Ron and Alan Smith. Later in the program, Ron Smith explained the derivation of the song, "The Old, Old Path", the presence of the Old, Old Path in Lamoni, and issued an invitation for all to visit the site. Then the song was sung by Rob Rolfe, Mike Jordison, Sue Beck, her sister Kathleen Myers, Alan and Valle and Ron and Di Smith.

Shower for Baby Akers

Sunday evening, September 8, the congregation gathered at the

Ron and Di Smith home for a baby shower for the Akers baby, who had not arrived on schedule or even with an unusual amount of medical prodding. The first event of the evening was a prayer that the baby would be born on its own and in good health.

Early September 17 Isaac Dene Akers was born, on his own and in good health.

South Iowa - North Missouri Retreat Held September 20-22

Over eighty people spent Friday night at Farwesta, and some 120 people spent Saturday night at the camp. During Saturday the attendance ranged well into the 100-200 range and Sunday, the count ranged up toward 300. From the opening mixer Friday night to the closing service Sunday, the Spirit of the Lord was with us, binding us together in love and teaching us valuable truths. Those from the Mount Ayr congregation who attended included Ed and Diane Anderson and family, George and Yvonne Galusha and family, Merle Jordison, Danny Kinnaman, George Knotts, Robert Rolfe, Alan and Valle, Delbert and Mildred, Ron and Di Smith and Cede. Ron and Di were in charge of a very successful mixer and two outstanding campfires. Diane, Mildred and Ron participated in the two hour missionary testimony service anchored by Bryan Mundy Saturday evening. Elder Douglas Smith, who we can partly claim by way of his employment as a medical doctor in Mount Ayr, was the speaker at the closing service. Our congregation was responsible for serving and cleaning up after breakfast Saturday morning. No one can report or evaluate the amount of ministry our people gave in administrations, classes, prayer and testimony services and in association with others at the camp.

Cessarries Galusha Wins Honor

Cessarries Galusha placed first in the Bill Riley Talent Show competition held during Ayr Days with the piano number, Chopin's "Fantasie - Impromptu". The win enters her in the Bill Riley Talent competition at the State Fair next year. Amy and April Mohler placed second with their violin duet.