

Liahona

**Bringing to Flower
the Richness of the
Spirit, p. 2**

**Seventeen-Day Journey
to the São Paulo
Brazil Temple, p. 8**



Liahona



ON THE COVER

Photographs by Craig Dimond, Steve Bunderson, and Brian K. Kelly; posed by models. See "Strengthening the Inner Self," p. 2.



THE FRIEND COVER

Photograph by Steve Bunderson; posed by models. See "We Bear Witness of Him," p. 2.



SEE P. 8

FEATURES

- 2 First Presidency Message: Strengthening the Inner Self
President James E. Faust
- 12 Divine Love *Elder Russell M. Nelson*
- 25 Visiting Teaching Message: Prepare Every Needful Thing
- 26 Words of Jesus: Forgiveness
Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr.
- 30 The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly
Elder Wilfredo R. López
- 36 Gospel Classics: Three Parables—The Unwise Bee, the Owl Express, and Two Lamps *Elder James E. Talmage*
- 42 Latter-day Saint Voices
A Special Witness of Jesus Christ
Irene Coimbra de Oliveira Cláudio
There Was No Question *Giuseppe Martinengo*
A Very Special Tablecloth *Juan Aldo Leone*
- 48 Using the February 2003 *Liabona*

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH

- 8 Birthday Temple Trip *Kristen Winmill Southwick*
- 18 Count on Maurice *Laury Livsey*
- 22 Questions and Answers: How Can I Help My Friends Understand the Law of Chastity?
- 33 Poster: Keep Yourself Free
- 34 Wake-Up Call *Isaac Kofi Morrison*
- 47 Did You Know?

THE FRIEND

- 2 Come Listen to a Prophet's Voice: We Bear Witness of Him
President Gordon B. Hinckley
- 4 Sharing Time: The Gospel Is Restored *Vicki F. Matsumori*
- 6 Pebble of Forgiveness *Jane McBride Choate*
- 9 Temple Cards
- 10 Trying to Be like Jesus: Helping Mom
Vinny Ken Muramatsu de Oliveira
- 11 New Testament Stories: The First Sacrament; Other Teachings at the Last Supper
- 16 Song: I'll Follow Him in Faith *Janice Kapp Perry*



SEE P. 18

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PALMYRA TEMPLE DEDICATION

I have been a reader of *A Liabona* (Portuguese) for some time. I especially enjoy the messages of President Gordon B. Hinckley.

In the September 2001 *Liabona*, I read a short history of the Prophet Joseph Smith's family titled "Cradle of the Restoration," a very beautiful story. Most touching of all was the excerpt of the Palmyra New York Temple dedicatory prayer. It was a simple prayer, but it was so great that it left us with no question about who inspired it. I had the privilege of sharing it with my family and with the full-time missionaries.

*Messias Cassimiro Valente,
Rio Branco Ward,
Natal Brazil Stake*

A SOURCE OF PEACE AND JOY

The *Liabona* (Spanish) is a source of peace and joy. Through the inspired words of our dear prophet and apostles, I have received instruction, consolation, guidance, hope, and much love. Sometimes the messages are especially for me; other times they seem to be for family members and others. The Spirit teaches me what I should underline and what I could share.

*Maria Carmen Holgado Moratal,
Alcoy Branch,
Alcoy Spain District*



"FIRST THINGS FIRST"

Each time I read the conference issue of the *Liabona* (Spanish), I find talks that strengthen me to meet my difficulties. I really liked the talk "First Things First," by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in the July 2001 *Liabona*. I have tried to apply his words to myself: "Do the best you can while on earth to have an *ideal family*."

I am the only Latter-day Saint in my family. When Elder Scott said, "Let nothing dissuade you from that objective" of having an ideal family, I resolved to take advantage of each opportunity to share my testimony with my family.

*Silvia Marisol Emérita García Bonito,
Los Planes Ward,
San Salvador El Salvador Stake*

CONGRATULATIONS ON NAUVOO TEMPLE

Congratulations on the rebuilding of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple. I'm not a member of your church. I'm a priest in the Community of Christ (formerly The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). I learned about the temple in the *Liabona* (German), which I have read for many years. I send you my best wishes, and may Heavenly Father be with you all.

*Michael Schoepke,
Berlin, Germany*



Strengthening the Inner Self

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
 Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The Apostle Paul’s wish for the Ephesian Saints was that the Lord would grant unto them “to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). In like manner, the basic program of the Church today is to strengthen the inner self. Our objective is to have everyone feel the security, love, and warm embrace of the gospel. The divine Redeemer gave us the pattern for achieving this when He commanded: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37, 39).

We seek to build inner moral strength and character in the members of the Church in complete harmony with the following statements of modern prophets and apostles: “Our primary purpose [is to establish] . . . independence, industry, thrift and self respect.”¹ Our “long term objective . . . is the building of character in the members of the

Church, . . . rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.”²

Our Priorities

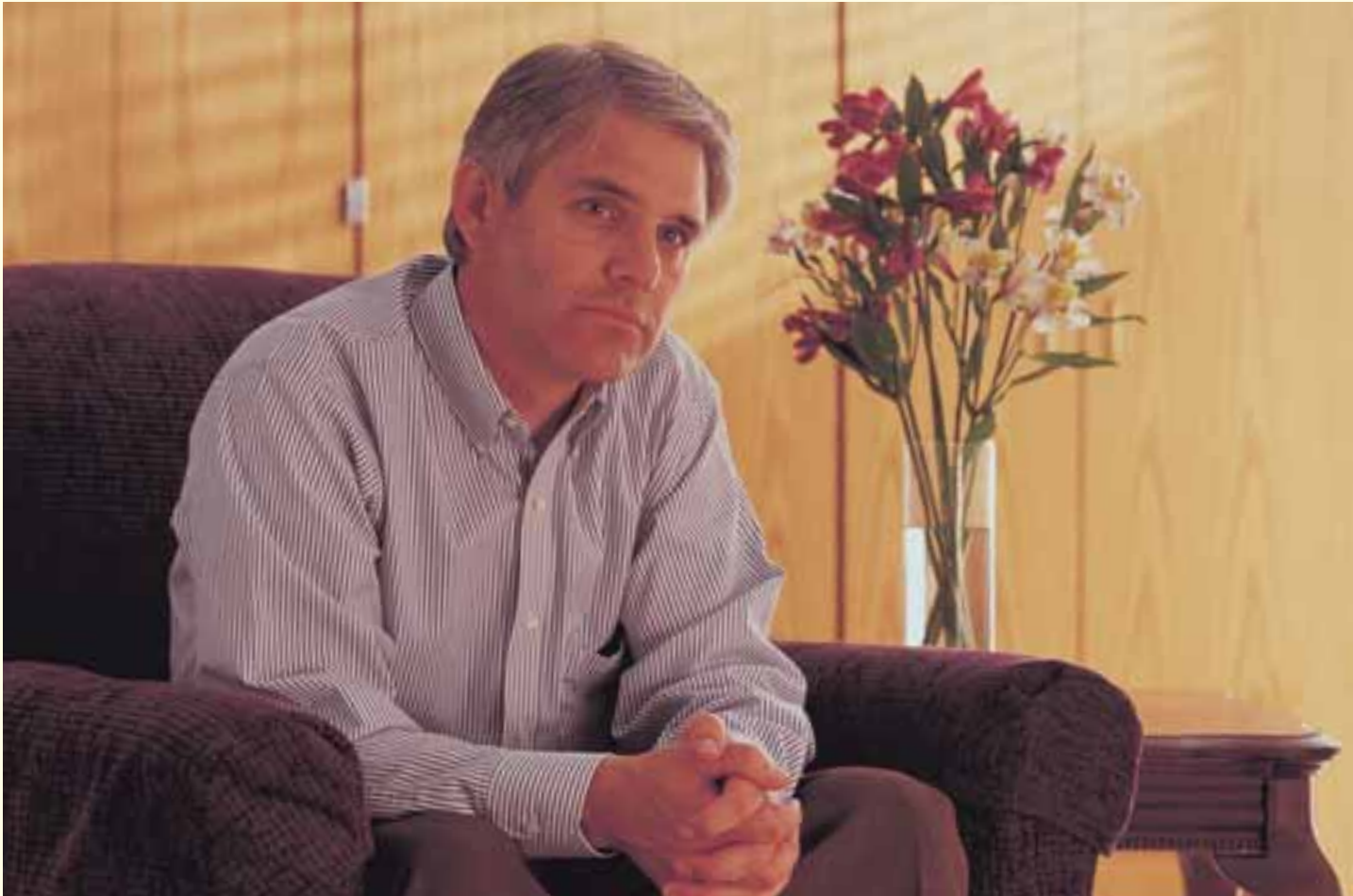
In order to build this inner strength, there might need to be some reordering of priorities in the planning and activities of the local programs of the Church. We will accomplish the Lord’s business better if our guiding stars are revealed principles rather than specified activities.

As we plan to reach, involve, and serve the one, the principles to be kept before us on a panoramic screen in heroic size are the two great injunctions of the Savior to all of His children: love and serve God and love and serve our fellowmen. The planning must begin by relating the activities to the spiritual needs of the members, including providing opportunities for members to be involved in meaningful service and, by their choice, in appropriate cultural, educational, recreational,



The basic program of the Church is to bring “to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit,” to strengthen the inner self.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY CRAIG DIMOND AND MICHAEL SCHOENFELD; POSED BY MODELS, RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY DON BUSATH



and social activities approved by priesthood leaders. We should bear in mind that the success of a given activity cannot always be judged by its size. Rather, it must be judged by its effect on the lives of those participating. There must be a clear understanding that principles are more important than programs and that people are more important than organizations. We are trying to teach principles and guidelines more than to promote programs, as we seek to strengthen the inner person with the Spirit of God.

Our Actions

Our effectiveness can be judged best by the way we translate inner strength into action. What our religion really is can best be judged by our lives. Thomas Carlyle reminds us that “conviction . . . is worthless till it convert itself into conduct.”³ For us to be strengthened by God, by His Spirit, President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) counseled that membership in the Church “must mean more than just being a ‘card carrying’ member of the Church with a tithing receipt, a membership card, a temple recommend,

An important part of the spiritual being within all of us is the quiet and sacred part from which we may feel a sanctification in our lives. It is that part of us wherein no other soul may intrude. It is that part that permits us to come close to the divine.

etc. It means to overcome the tendencies to criticize and to strive continually to improve inward weaknesses and not merely the outward appearances.”⁴

We recognize that many of the adult single members of the Church may not have all the blessings they desire at this time. They are, however, on equal footing with all the Saints in their ability to keep the two great commandments and be abundantly blessed and strengthened thereby. The quality of their spirituality and devotion to the Master can be as fulfilling for them as for anyone. The quality of their goodness toward others can likewise be as meaningful and rewarding as the service given by anyone. Certainly spiritual understanding and testimony are available to all who earnestly seek them.

All Things Are Spiritual

The strengthening of the inner self must come about as Saints are strengthened spiritually. The admonition to the Galatians was, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8). Problems will yield to a spiritual solution, for the higher laws involve the spiritual. The Lord said, "All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal" (D&C 29:34). But invoking these higher laws and then putting them into operation do not involve the claiming of higher *rights*; rather they require the performance of higher *duties*.

Often we feel that we need help beyond our own natural gifts and abilities in finding our way in a complex, challenging, and difficult world. The prophet Alma made clear the source of his understanding in many matters: "They are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God" (Alma 5:46). Many in this world now walk the streets and byways in fear of their lives, but if they had an inner strength and security, there would be no need for concern. The Savior said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28).

Healing the Inner Self

The healing that we all so often need is the healing of our souls and spirits. This can come through a transfusion of the spiritual into our lives. The seventh article of faith states that, among other spiritual gifts, we believe in the gift of healing. To me, this gift extends to the healing of both the body and the spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks peace to the soul, and this spiritual solace comes by invoking spiritual

gifts, which are claimed and manifested in many ways. They are rich, full, and abundant in the Church today. They flow from the humble and proper use of a testimony. Christ is the Great Physician who rose from the dead "with healing in his wings" (2 Nephi 25:13), and the Comforter is the agent of healing.

If we are to further strengthen the inner person, the inner self must be purged and cleansed of transgression. Companionship with evil causes our whole being to die spiritually. The spiritual tap in our lives will not turn on until all transgressions, particularly those involving moral turpitude, are purged. I refer not only to sexual sins but also to all forms of wrongdoing, including lying, cheating, stealing, and consciously or recklessly inflicting injury upon others.

Our Spiritual Feelings

An important part of the spiritual being within all of us is the quiet and sacred part from which we may feel a sanctification in our lives. It is that part of us wherein no other soul may intrude. It is that part that permits us to come close to the divine, both in and out of this world. This portion of our beings is reserved only for ourselves and our Creator. We open the portals thereof when we pray. It is here where we may retreat and meditate. It is possible for the Holy Ghost to abide in this special part of us. It is a place of special communion. It is the master cell of our spiritual battery. But this great energizer becomes dead when we allow sin to creep stealthily into our lives. The Romans were reminded, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

As we undertake to strengthen the inner soul, we move beyond concern for things that



The Holy Spirit speaks peace to the soul, and this spiritual solace comes by invoking spiritual gifts. Christ is the Great Physician who rose from the dead "with healing in his wings," and the Comforter is the agent of healing.



May we be strengthened in our inner selves with might by His Spirit, for spirituality is like sunlight: it passes into the unclean and is not tainted.

we can hold and possess. A wise man said, “The wealth of a soul is measured by how much it can feel; its poverty, by how little.”⁵

The Eternal Inner Self

The inner soul, with all that it has stored within it, is what continues beyond this life. A thoughtful author reminds us, “Everything here, but the soul of man, is a passing shadow. The only enduring substance is within.”⁶

We are comforted by the knowledge that those who strengthen their inner selves shall see the face of God. The Lord Himself said, “It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (D&C 93:1). Edna St. Vincent Millay reminds us,

*The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.*⁷

For the inner self to be strengthened, a great humility must come into the inner being. Gideon said of himself, “My family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house” (Judges 6:15). Gideon went on to become the hero who delivered Israel from oppression by the Midianites.

The Old Testament says, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). Moses was one of the greatest prophets who ever lived and was the author of five books in the Old Testament.

Spiritual Sunlight

In my own search for inner strength, I express my respect, appreciation, and

gratitude for the example of the First Presidency, other General Authorities, and a host of other good men and women of this Church throughout the world who stand steadfastly against the ill winds that blow and the forces of insecurity, doubt, and destruction all about us. They, through the Spirit of God, recognize the falsity of the dulcet voices and the siren songs of deceit among us that advocate instant gratification, offering no lasting relationships in life and teaching that there is little responsibility for wrongdoing. With steadfast hands and holy hearts, these stalwart souls stand as trumpeters upon the watchtowers of righteousness, hope, and inner peace.

The oppressive fog that beclouds the tortuous lanes and passages of your lives will disappear in the spiritual sunlight that comes only from God. This spiritual sunlight will not shine unless we diligently and humbly seek to enjoy His Spirit, for “the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind” (D&C 64:34).

The Spirit of the Lord can ever be with us, even in the overheated ovens of life into which we may be cast, so that those who behold us will always see that we have a holy companion. Nebuchadnezzar experienced this when he looked into the fiery furnace and noted: “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:24–25).

May there be found in our thoughts and actions the manifestation of an inward, spiritual peace and strength. May we have an absolute faith that all things are possible to God and hold in our remembrance that through our obedience all things may be made known to us by His Holy Spirit. “He



The oppressive fog that beclouds the tortuous lanes and passages of your lives will disappear in the spiritual sunlight that comes only from God. This spiritual sunlight will not shine unless we diligently and humbly seek to enjoy His Spirit.

that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:8).

And in sowing to our spirits, may we be strengthened in our inner selves with might by His Spirit, for spirituality is like sunlight: it passes into the unclean and is not tainted. May our lives be such that the spiritual within us may ascend up through the common, the sordid, and the evil and sanctify our souls. ■

NOTES

1. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3.
2. Albert E. Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan* (Gospel Doctrine course of study, 1946), 44.
3. In Martin H. Manser, comp., *The Westminster Collection of Christian Quotations* (2001), 2.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 41.
5. William Rounseville Alger.
6. W. E. Channing.
7. “Renaissance,” *Renaissance and Other Poems* (1917), 14.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After you prayerfully prepare, share this message using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. A few examples follow:

1. Ask family members what a person can do to strengthen his or her physical body, such as exercising, eating a proper diet, and getting sufficient rest. Then have them identify ideas in President Faust’s message for building inner moral strength. Share your testimony of how some of these ideas have helped you withstand insecurity, doubt, and temptation.

2. Show family members a battery and review how a battery works. How is our spirituality like a battery? Read the section “Our Spiritual Feelings,” and discuss ways we can recharge our spiritual batteries.

3. Invite family members to discuss the benefits we receive from the sun. Read with them the section “Spiritual Sunlight.” Discuss ways spirituality is like sunlight and sin is like an oppressive fog. What are some ways President Faust said we can increase spiritual sunlight in our lives?






B i r t h d a y

TEMPLE TRIP

BY KRISTEN WINMILL SOUTHWICK



Fifteenth birthdays are a big deal to young women in Brazil. And Priscila Vital's celebration was even more special than a traditional party or dance—she was able to travel by boat and bus to the temple.



Over the years, Brazil has become famous for its skilled soccer teams, white beaches, and tropical climate. But the force behind this pulsating, vibrant culture is perhaps its greatest resource: its warm, fun-loving people. Having a good time and being with friends and family are the central components of most activities. And among the most important and anticipated days in any Brazilian young woman's life is her 15th birthday celebration. Families sometimes save money for years to put on an extravagant night of dining, dancing, and gift-giving for this coming-of-age celebration.

Priscila Vital, a member of the Rio Negro stake in Manaus, Brazil, had to make a difficult choice about how to celebrate her 15th birthday. Priscila's birthday would come

while her mother, Francilene, was in the middle of a 17-day stake caravan trip to the São Paulo Brazil Temple. Francilene had saved money for three years to go to the temple for the first time, and she had enough money to either take Priscila with her or throw a traditional 15th birthday party upon her return. Priscila's decision was further complicated because most of the relatives in her tight-knit family were members of other churches and had been eagerly anticipating her birthday for several years. They did not understand the importance of going to the temple.

"All of my aunts and uncles wanted me to stay and have the birthday party, especially because I'm the only girl in my family," says Priscila. "When I decided to go to the temple, it was a good opportunity for me to show them just how important this was to me."

Priscila's family joined the Church in 1991 but became less active shortly after their baptisms. In early 1998



Faithful Church members from Manaus (above, far right) travel a great distance by boat and bus to São Paulo (above) every year. Priscila was able to do baptisms for the dead at the temple, and she hopes to someday return there with her entire family (right).

Priscila's friend began investigating the Church and asked Priscila to

come with her to seminary.

"I had gone to another church, but I could never understand what they were teaching. In seminary everything made sense, and I could understand the gospel. Eventually, the Spirit testified to me that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. When I learned he was a prophet it was so good and so sweet that I cried," Priscila says.

Priscila's mother, Francilene, enjoyed welcoming the ward's young women into their home. She encouraged Priscila's attendance at Church activities, and she soon began attending regularly herself. Francilene is now serving as her ward's Relief Society president.

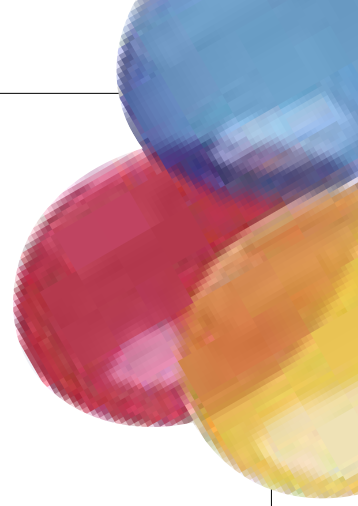
Witness of Increasing Faith

Priscila's conversion to the gospel is one of the many miracles taking place in Manaus. The busy port city of 1.5 million people is the industrial and commercial center of the Amazon Basin. The first Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in the jungle city 23 years ago. Since then, the Church in Manaus has grown to five stakes, one mission, and 14,000 members.

As a witness of the increasing faith of Manaus's members, each year between 150 to 200 members in Manaus go on a multistake caravan to the temple in São Paulo, the most accessible temple in Brazil. Because of the dense forest that surrounds the city, the only way to travel from Manaus to São Paulo is by boat or plane. Plane tickets are very expensive, so eight years ago the stake presidencies in the city arranged a yearly temple caravan by chartering a boat and buses for those desiring to go to the temple. By sharing the costs, the members have enough money to travel to the temple with their families.

The caravan begins by traveling for four days by boat to Porto Velho, a Brazilian city near the border with Peru and Bolivia. From there, members board chartered buses to take them an additional three days and nights to São Paulo, where they stay in Church-owned apartments next to the São Paulo Brazil Temple. For four days they do temple work, then make the reverse journey homeward.

Priscila prepared for her temple trip by studying general conference talks about the temple with her mother, reading Church magazines, and studying the scriptures. She also gathered the names of four generations on her father's side of the family so she could perform vicarious baptisms for them.



Priscila’s mom compiled the family history information for four generations of her side of the family.

Once the 185 members departed Manaus by boat, Priscila and the five other young women in the caravan helped tend the Primary-age children and fixed meals. At night they slept in hammocks on the boat deck to try to stay cool in the hot jungle temperatures.

“Being on the caravan was so spiritual because everyone was so excited and anxious to go to the temple,” Priscila comments. “Most people had never been to the temple, so almost no one knew exactly what to expect. Everyone sang songs and read scriptures together. We were so united.”

The bus ride was the most difficult part of the journey because the buses traveled both day and night for three days, and the members were unable to move around much. As a result, many of the members had severe pain and swelling in their legs.



Finally There

When they arrived at the temple, Priscila immediately went to the baptistry to do baptisms for the dead, while her mother went to a different part of the temple to receive her endowment. Priscila spent every day in São Paulo in the temple, even though it was the first time she had been to the large metropolis.

“I spent my 15th birthday in the temple. When the baptismal font coordinator discovered it was my birthday,

he told me he had a present for me,” Priscila explains. “So many people come to the temple that most patrons can do the baptisms for only five people. He gave me a large stack of names of people who needed their baptismal work done for them. He couldn’t have given me a better present.”

Priscila’s mother comments about other changes that happened in Priscila’s life: “The caravan spiritually influenced her. She was a light for all of the other members. Everyone came back different. On the bus ride home, we felt that our appearances and faces had changed; we were all so happy.”

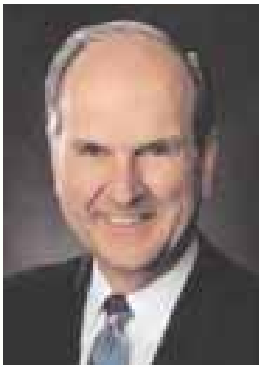
Priscila’s example and willingness to share the gospel helped many of her family members and friends join the Church. One of them, her aunt, recently returned from serving in the Brazil Recife Mission. Now Priscila is encouraging her father and two brothers to prepare to go to the temple so they can be sealed as a family—something she hopes will happen soon.

For Priscila, giving up her 15th birthday celebration was no sacrifice. “When it was time to come home, I didn’t want to leave,” Priscila remarks. “All I want to do is save money so I can go back to the temple as quickly as possible.” ■

Kristen Winmill Southwick is a member of the Weston Second Ward, Boston Massachusetts Stake.

Divine

BY ELDER RUSSELL M. NELSON
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



In today's world trembling with terror and hatred, our knowledge of divine love is of utmost importance. We bear responsibility to understand and testify that Heavenly Father and Jesus the Christ are glorified, living, and loving personages. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."¹ Jesus "so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God."² Indeed, the Father and the Son are one—in purpose and love.³

Divine Love Is Perfect and Infinite

Their love is divine by definition. Scriptures also describe it as perfect.⁴ It is infinite because the Atonement was an act of love for all who ever lived, who now live, and who will ever live.⁵ It is also infinite because it transcends time.

Divine Love Is Enduring

Divine love is enduring.⁶ "The Lord . . . keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."⁷

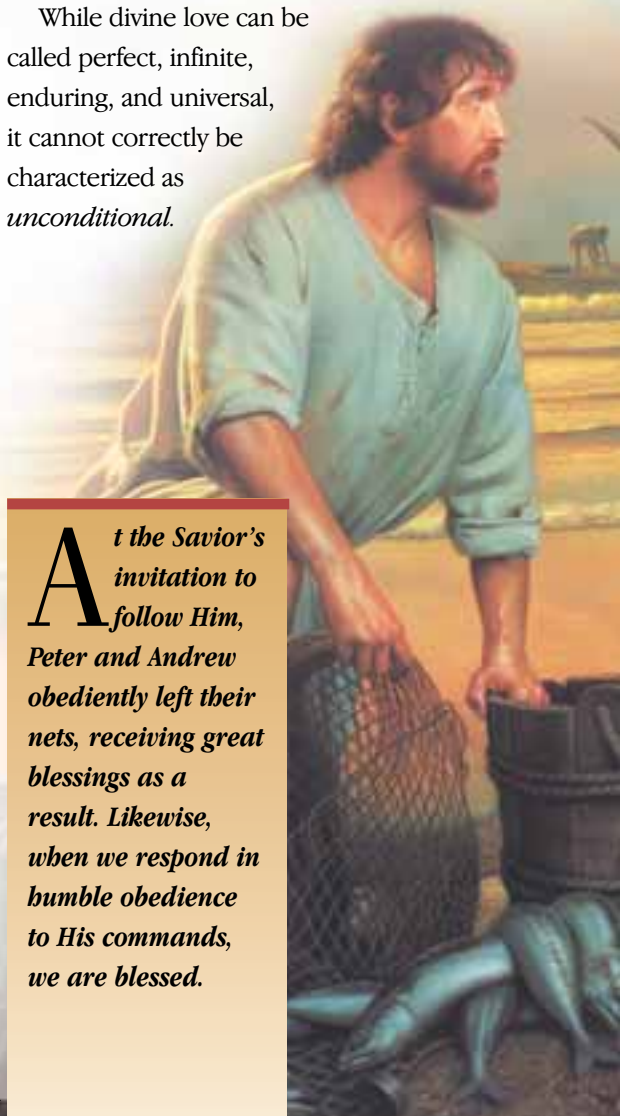
Divine Love Is Universal

Divine love is universal.⁸ God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."⁹ Jesus is the light of the world,¹⁰ giving life and law to all things.¹¹ "He inviteth . . . all to come

unto him . . . ; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female."¹² And all are invited to pray unto our Father in Heaven.¹³

Divine Love Is Also Conditional

While divine love can be called perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal, it cannot correctly be characterized as *unconditional*.

A painting depicting Jesus Christ with a beard and long hair, wearing a light blue robe, standing on a beach. He is looking towards the right. In the foreground, there are several fish and a fishing net. In the background, there are other figures and a boat on the water.

At the Savior's invitation to follow Him, Peter and Andrew obediently left their nets, receiving great blessings as a result. Likewise, when we respond in humble obedience to His commands, we are blessed.

Love

While divine love can be called perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal, it cannot correctly be characterized as unconditional.



The word does not appear in the scriptures. On the other hand, many verses affirm that the higher levels of love the Father and the Son feel for each of us—and certain divine blessings stemming from that love—are *conditional*. Before citing examples, it is well to recognize various forms of conditional expression in the scriptures.

Conditional Forms

Several forms of conditional expression may be found in the scriptures:

- “*If* . . . [certain conditions exist], *then* . . . [certain consequences follow].” (The indicators *if* and *then* may be written or implied.)
- “*Inasmuch as* . . . [certain conditions exist], . . . [certain consequences follow].”¹⁴
- “*Except* . . . *cannot* . . .”¹⁵
- “*Prove* . . . , *if* . . .” For example, a verse pertaining to our creation reveals a prime purpose for our sojourn here in mortality: “We will *prove* them herewith, to see *if* they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.”¹⁶ Life here is a period of mortal

probation. Our thoughts and actions determine whether our mortal probation can merit heavenly approbation.¹⁷

The Conditional Nature of Divine Love

With scriptural patterns of conditional statements in mind, we note many verses that declare the conditional nature of divine love for us. Examples include:

- “*If* ye keep my commandments, [*then*] ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”¹⁸
- “*If* you keep not my commandments, [*then*] the love of the Father shall not continue with you.”¹⁹
- “*If* a man love me, [*then*] he will keep my words: and my Father will love him.”²⁰
- “I love them that love me; and those that seek me . . . shall find me.”²¹
- “God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”²²
- The Lord “loveth those who will have him to be their God.”²³
- “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”²⁴

At the Last Judgment, the Savior will judge us according to our obedience during mortality. Our thoughts and actions will determine whether we merit heavenly approbation.



WHAT DOES CONDITIONAL MEAN?

The term *conditional* comes from Latin roots—*con*, meaning “with,” and *dicere*, meaning “to talk.” Thus, *conditional* means that “bounds or conditions have been communicated verbally.”

The term *unconditional* means “without condition or limitation; absolute.”

The Conditional Nature of Divine Blessings

It is equally evident that certain blessings come from a loving Lord only *if* required conditions are met. Examples include:

- “*If* thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, . . . *then* I will lengthen thy days.”²⁵
- “*If* thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments . . . ; *then* will I perform my word with thee.”²⁶
- “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.”²⁷
- “When we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”²⁸
- “Unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.”²⁹

The Lord declares: “All who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof. . . .

“And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

“. . . The conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not

made and entered into and sealed . . . of him who is anointed, . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.”³⁰

Other laws are designed to bless us here in mortality. One such law is tithing: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and *prove* me now herewith, saith the Lord . . . , *if* I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”³¹ Such a blessing is *conditional*. Those who fail to tithe have no promise.³²

Again, “all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised . . . that *if* ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land; and he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, *if* ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.”³³

Why is divine love conditional? Because God loves us and wants us to be happy. “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, *if* we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”³⁴

Our Defense against False Ideologies

Understanding that divine love and blessings are not truly “unconditional” can defend us against common fallacies such as these: “Since God’s love is unconditional, He will love me regardless . . .”; or “Since ‘God is love,’³⁵ He will love me unconditionally, regardless . . .”

These arguments are used by anti-Christ to woo people with deception. Nehor, for example, promoted himself by teaching falsehoods: He “testified unto the people that all mankind should be saved at the last day, . . . for the Lord had created all men, . . . and, in the end, *all men should have eternal life*.”³⁶ Sadly, some of the people believed



THE LAST JUDGMENT, BY JOHN SCOTT



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BLUNDERSON; POSED BY MODELS

Our children are to be taught that they receive the blessings of God's love by first obeying His commandments.

except ye shall keep my commandments, . . . ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”³⁸

Divine Love and the Sinner

Does this mean the Lord does not love the sinner? Of course not. Divine love is infinite and universal. The Savior loves both saints and sinners. The Apostle John affirmed, “We love him, because he first loved us.”³⁹ And Nephi, upon seeing in vision the Lord’s mortal ministry, declared: “The world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his *loving kindness* and his long-suffering towards the children of men.”⁴⁰ We know the expansiveness of the Redeemer’s love because He died that *all* who die might live again.⁴¹

Immortality and Eternal Life

God declared that His work and glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”⁴² Thanks to the Atonement, the gift of immortality is *unconditional*.⁴³ The greater gift of eternal life, however, is *conditional*.⁴⁴ In order to qualify, one must deny oneself of ungodliness⁴⁵ and honor the ordinances and covenants of the temple.⁴⁶

The resplendent bouquet of God’s love—including eternal life—includes blessings for which we must qualify, not entitlements to be expected unworthily. Sinners cannot bend His will to theirs and require Him to bless them in sin.⁴⁷ If they desire to enjoy every bloom in His beautiful bouquet, they must repent.⁴⁸

Counsel to Repent

President Brigham Young (1801–77) declared: “Every blessing the Lord proffers to his people is on conditions. These conditions are: ‘Obey my law, keep my commandments, walk in my ordinances, observe my statutes, love mercy, . . . keep yourselves pure in the law, and then you are entitled to these blessings, and not until then.’”⁴⁹

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) expressed a similar thought: “This is how I look at the requirements which God has made upon his people collectively and individually, and I do believe that I have no claim upon God or upon my brethren for blessing, favor, confidence or love, unless, by my works, I prove that I am worthy thereof, and I never expect to receive blessings that I do not merit.”⁵⁰

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said that the Lord “‘cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.’ (D&C 1:31.) . . . We will better appreciate his love . . . if similar abhorrence for sin impels us to transform our lives through repentance.”⁵¹

Given the imperfections we all have, individual initiative is imperative: “He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

“And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even

the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord.”⁵²

In climbing the pathway of repentance, both the effort and the result count. The Lord taught that spiritual gifts are given to “those who love me and keep all my commandments, and [who] *seeketh so to do*.”⁵³

Divine Love Provides Us with a Pattern

Jesus asked us to love one another as He has loved us.⁵⁴ Is that possible? Can our love for others really approach divine love? Yes it can!⁵⁵ The pure love of Christ is granted to all who seek and qualify for it.⁵⁶ Such love includes service⁵⁷ and requires obedience.⁵⁸

Compliance with divine law requires faith—the pivotal point of mortality’s testing and trials. At the same time, faith proves our love for God.⁵⁹ The more committed

we become to patterning our lives after His, the purer and more divine our love becomes.⁶⁰

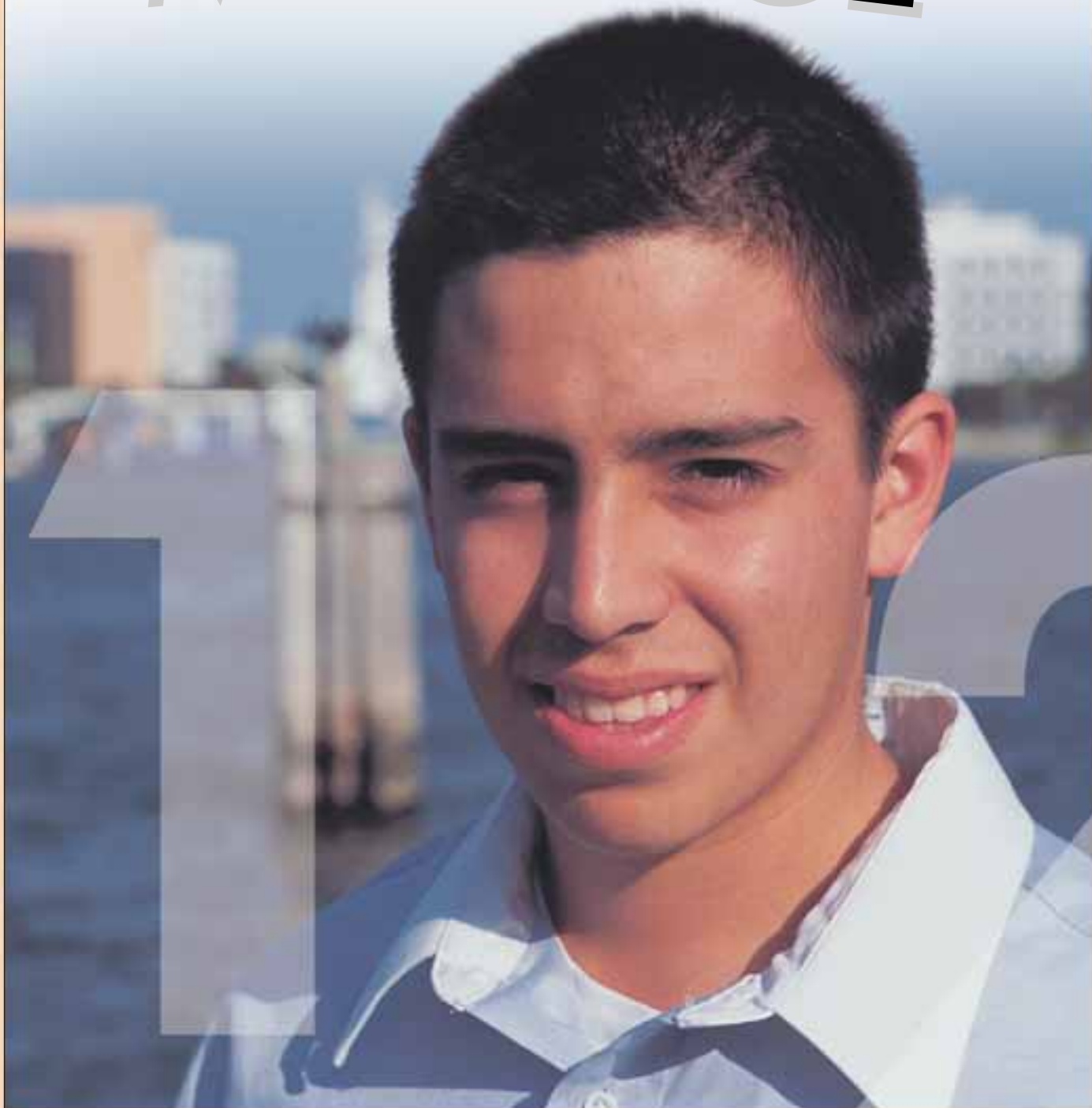
Perhaps no love in mortality approaches the divine more than the love parents have for their children. As parents, we have the same obligation to teach obedience that our heavenly parents felt obliged to teach us. While we can teach the need for tolerance of others’ differences,⁶¹ we cannot tolerate their infractions of the laws of God. Our children are to be taught the doctrines of the kingdom,⁶² to trust in the Lord, and to know that they receive the blessings of His love by first obeying His commandments.⁶³

Divine love is perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal. The full flower of divine love and our greatest blessings from that love are conditional—predicated upon our obedience to eternal law. I pray that we may qualify for those blessings and rejoice forever. ■

NOTES

1. John 3:16.
2. D&C 34:3.
3. See 2 Nephi 31:21; Alma 12:33; D&C 93:3.
4. See 1 John 4:12, 15–18.
5. See Alma 34:9–12. Divine love is infinite also because all the faithful may be eventually “encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love” (Alma 26:15).
6. See Isaiah 54:10; see also 3 Nephi 22:10.
7. Deuteronomy 7:9; see also 1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 105:8.
8. Defined as “of, relating to, extending to, or affecting the entire world or all within the world; worldwide” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th ed. [2000], “universal,” 1883).
9. Matthew 5:45; see also 3 Nephi 12:45.
10. See John 8:12; 9:5.
11. See D&C 88:6–13.
12. 2 Nephi 26:33.
13. See Matthew 6:6; see also 3 Nephi 13:6; Moroni 7:48.
14. For examples, see 1 Nephi 2:20; 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20; 4:4; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Alma 9:13; 36:1, 30; 38:1; 50:20; Helaman 4:15.
15. Examples are: “*Except* a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5; emphasis added), and “*Except* ye abide my law ye *cannot* attain to this glory” (D&C 132:21; emphasis added). See also Ether 12:34; D&C 25:15; 132:21.
16. Abraham 3:25; emphasis added; see also Malachi 3:10; 3 Nephi 24:10.
17. See Matthew 25:21, 23.
18. John 15:10; emphasis added.
19. D&C 95:12; emphasis added.
20. John 14:23; emphasis added.
21. Proverbs 8:17.
22. Acts 10:34–35.
23. 1 Nephi 17:40.
24. John 14:21.
25. 1 Kings 3:14; emphasis added; see also Deuteronomy 19:9.
26. 1 Kings 6:12; emphasis added.
27. D&C 82:10.
28. D&C 130:21.
29. D&C 88:38; see also 132:5.
30. D&C 132:5–7; see also Alma 9:12; 42:13, 17.
31. Malachi 3:10; emphasis added; see also 3 Nephi 24:10. The Lord did not restrict *how* He would bless tithe payers. Some are blessed spiritually more than they are temporally.
32. See D&C 119:4–5. Tithing is also required for one to be enrolled with the people of God (see D&C 85:3).
33. Mosiah 2:22; emphasis added.
- That conditional counsel is repeated many times throughout the scriptures. See 1 Nephi 2:20; 4:14; 2 Nephi 1:9, 20; 4:4; Jacob 2:17–19; Jarom 1:9; Omni 1:6; Mosiah 1:7; 2:31; Alma 9:13; 36:1, 30; 37:13; 38:1; 48:15, 25; 50:20; Helaman 3:20.
34. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 255–56; emphasis added.
35. 1 John 4:8, 16.
36. Alma 1:4; emphasis added; see also 1:3, 5–6; 2 Nephi 28:8–9. Such an unconditional concept (eternal life for all) would negate the need for ordinances, covenants, and temple work.
37. Alma 41:10.
38. 3 Nephi 12:20; emphasis added.
39. 1 John 4:19.
40. 1 Nephi 19:9; emphasis added.
41. See Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; see also 1 Corinthians 15:22.
42. Moses 1:39.
43. See Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 12:8; D&C 76:17; Joseph Smith Translation, John 5:29.
44. See D&C 14:7.
45. See Moroni 10:32; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 16:26.
46. See D&C 132:19.
47. See Alma 11:37.
48. The Lord said, “Thou art not excusable in thy transgressions; . . . go thy way and sin no more” (D&C 24:2). See also John 8:11; D&C 6:35; 29:3; 82:7; 97:27.
49. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 454.
50. *Deseret News*, 12 Nov. 1873, 644.
51. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 59.
52. D&C 1:32–33.
53. D&C 46:9; emphasis added.
54. See John 13:34; 15:12.
55. See Ether 12:33–34; Moroni 7:46–47.
56. See Moroni 7:48.
57. See Galatians 5:13; Mosiah 2:18–21; 4:15.
58. John taught, “Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected” (1 John 2:5).
59. See Deuteronomy 13:3; John 14:15; 15:6–7.
60. See Matthew 6:19–22; D&C 88:67–68; 93:11–20.
61. See Articles of Faith 1:11.
62. Doctrines include the plan of salvation, faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 8:10; D&C 68:25; Moses 6:57–62).
63. See Mosiah 4:6–7.

COUNT ON MAURICE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURY LIVSEY; STILL LIFE PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUKE



BY LAURY LIVSEY

The sophomore math whiz sat in the classroom after school waiting for the football star to come in for his weekly tutoring session. The guy who enjoys algebra, calculus, and trigonometry spent an extra hour or so each week teaching polynomial expressions and practicing exponential equations with the football hero, someone many called the best high school running back in the United States. Winning a football game he could do. But algebra? It was something of a challenge. That's when the tutor came to the rescue.

When the school year ended, so did the tutoring sessions. The tutor had his junior year to look forward to while the tutor's student graduated and accepted an athletic scholarship to the University of Miami.

That's why the math whiz says, "Someday when he's a famous football player, I can tell my kids I taught him math."

Now two years later, Maurice Navarro is

once again sitting in a classroom at Coral Gables Senior High near Miami, Florida. School ended 30 minutes ago, but just like in years before, several students have gathered around Maurice as he teaches a math concept his fellow students aren't quite understanding.

That's Maurice Navarro. Still the math tutor. Still helping others.

A Busy Guy

"That comes from my mother," Maurice says of his service. "She taught me that if I'm able to help others, it's very important that I do. It's difficult for some of the kids to grasp math, so that's why I tutor. Since math does come pretty easily to me, I'm glad to help."

The same must be true of his volunteer work at two area medical centers. Each Friday and Saturday, Maurice donates about nine hours doing numerous jobs at both hospitals.

"I work with patients, moving them in

Maurice Navarro is a busy guy. But not so busy that he can't find time to tutor other students and volunteer at two local hospitals.

wheelchairs or in their beds through the hospital,” he says. “When I’m there, I get to see the smiles on the people’s faces when they see someone doing something nice for them. I love meeting the patients, seeing their faces, and seeing their reactions.

“It’s that way with tutoring,” he continues. “When I hear somebody say, ‘I got it!’ about a concept I’m teaching, I feel I’ve done my job. And it’s the same in the hospital with the patients, only with smiles.”



An Example

In the Fountainebleau (Spanish) Ward, Miami Florida (Spanish) Stake, Maurice is the first assistant to the bishop in the priests quorum. Not long ago, he was a young deacon looking up to the priests who were preparing to leave on missions. Now it’s Maurice’s turn to lead. “Since I’m the oldest one in Young Men, I hope the deacons and teachers look at me as an example in the same way I looked to the older boys when I was that age,” he says.



For his Eagle Scout project, Maurice invited parents to attend an open house where they could fingerprint their children. Once or twice a week, he also tutors fellow students on the finer points of math.

Tangible evidence of Maurice’s example to other Aaronic Priesthood holders in his ward is the Eagle Scout project he completed last year. Maurice organized a child identification day and invited people in his community to bring their children to the ward building on a Saturday so the children could be fingerprinted and videotaped. After police gave a presentation on ways to protect children, the parents in attendance took the fingerprint cards and the videotapes home. Now, if this



information is ever needed to identify and find a lost child, it will be at the parents’ fingertips.

Maurice spent numerous hours coordinating this project, which attracted close to 100 children. As a bonus, he also asked people who came to bring one or two cans of food to donate to a food bank. He eventually filled three big boxes with canned goods.

“What I enjoyed about that project is that it was different,” Maurice says. “I really wanted to make a difference.

I hope people never have to use their video or the fingerprint cards. I don't want it ever to come to that point. But those things are a good safety net."

A Family Tradition

Maurice is 18 years old and will turn 19 in November. After graduating from high school, he will get his chance to perform some serious, long-term service.

He's received plenty of peculiar looks from classmates as he talks about the Church's missionary program. When it comes to Church subjects—confusion over what missions are or questions about the Word of Wisdom—Maurice is the one students turn to. At Coral Gables Senior High, Maurice is the only Latter-day Saint.

"People at school ask me about missions all the time, and I'm glad to explain. For many of them, it's hard



to comprehend that I would want to do this. They're amazed when I tell them we go for two years and that nobody's making us go. I'm definitely going on a mission.

"My dad was baptized when he was in his 20s, so he never went on a mission," he adds. "The only person in my family who has gone on a mission is my uncle. So I see my

mission as starting a tradition in our family."

Lots of Small Parts

Throughout his life, Maurice has played a small part in the lives of a lot of people. Coral Gables students who have been tutored by Maurice are passing math tests, and Maurice can feel that he has contributed to their successes. Parents have recorded information about their children on file—just in case. They can thank Maurice for that. And there he is, wheeling a patient from one room to another at the hospital. No big deal? Perhaps. But it's another small thing Maurice finds time to do.

Maybe it won't be exactly how Maurice envisioned it after all. One day in the future, the football star just might turn to his children and talk about a guy he knew in high school. "Kids," he will say, "Maurice is the guy who taught me math." ■



Questions & Answers

How Can I Help My Friends Understand the Law of Chastity?

My friends have a hard time understanding why I live the law of chastity. What can I say that will help them understand the Lord's teachings about this sensitive topic?

Answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

LIAHONA'S ANSWER

Not long ago, people in many cultures would not have questioned your decision to live a chaste life. But

societal beliefs have changed so dramatically in recent years that chastity before marriage and fidelity after

marriage might seem incomprehensible to some. Add to that the fact that chastity is a sacred, private matter, and you may feel you are facing a difficult discussion.

But don't let societal pressure or fear prevent you from discussing this important topic with your friends. It is possible that your ideas might be just what they are looking for. Perhaps you can help them understand that to be chaste is the best choice because it is a commandment from God and—rather than being restrictive—it offers tremendous freedom, peace, and safety.

If you seek His guidance, the Lord will help you find a way to appropriately share your reasons for living the law of chastity. The exact words you say will depend on the type of relationship you have with your friends and the situation you are in. A short answer such as "A chaste life makes me happy; I know it's the way God wants us to live" will probably suffice in some circumstances. But if you are talking with a good friend, you might want to share some insights on sexual purity found in the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*.



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY ELDON K. LINSCHOTEN; POSED BY MODELS

Following are some other key points you may want to discuss:

- Chastity puts your focus where it should be. Friendship, respect, understanding, communication, trust, shared interests, and gospel values are the foundation for a solid relationship. Putting these things first allows you to get to know each other in an appropriate and comfortable way.

- Living the law of chastity allows you greater confidence and self-respect. Being unchaste often opens the door to relationships in which your physical self is valued above all the other good qualities you possess. Chastity allows others to value your personality, abilities, kindness, and goodness.

- Chastity keeps you safe. Not only are you certain to remain free from many physical diseases, but your spiritual health is protected as well.

- Chastity is a commandment (see Galatians 5:16–17, 19–21). Obedience to the commandments brings happiness, peace, and many other benefits.

- Living a chaste life shows your respect for Heavenly Father. The power to create life is something we should reverence. If you break the law of chastity, you are making a mockery of a very sacred gift.

- You live this law because you want to; chastity is a blessing.

- Chastity makes your future marriage stronger. When a couple is chaste, their relationship can be one of total trust.

READERS' ANSWERS

One day some friends began to say chastity is a thing of the past, that today no one obeys this commandment. I quickly said that I obey it and I know plenty of people who obey it. My friends laughed and asked me what I would do when faced with a temptation. I told them about an experience when I said no to someone. When she refused to listen, I left her presence, running. Then I told them we are created in the image of God and our bodies are sacred. Some months later a friend who listened that day was baptized.



*Jean Fernando da Silva, 20,
Planaltina Second Ward,
Brasilia Brazil North Stake*

When I wasn't able to change my friends' opinion with words, I tried to do so with my example. Many times I had to refrain from participating in their activities. Although I was left to myself, I knew I was doing the right thing.

Now some of my friends have had unpleasant experiences, and some of them are starting to live this important law.



*Linda López Fierro, 16,
Isidro Ayora Ward,
Guayaquil Ecuador East
Stake*

We can explain that to enjoy the blessings of God, we need the guidance and constant companionship of



A WARNING

In the beginning there was one among us who rebelled at the plan of our Heavenly Father. He vowed to destroy and to disrupt the plan.

“He was prevented from having a mortal body and was cast out—limited forever from establishing a kingdom of his own. He became satanically jealous. He knows that this power of creation is not just an incident to the plan, but a key to it.

“He knows that if he can entice you to use this power prematurely, to use it too soon, or to misuse it in any way, you may well lose your opportunities for eternal progression.”—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (“Why Stay Morally Clean,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 112) ■

the Holy Ghost. Abstaining from premarital sex and remaining faithful to our spouse after marriage are essential to retaining this companionship.



*Emeka Ofoegbu, 23,
Ughorikoko Branch,
Warri Nigeria District*

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught that “a woman should be queen of her own body” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1952, 86). If my spirit submits to bodily pleasures, I will lose self-respect. If I cannot respect myself, I cannot love Heavenly Father with all my heart, mind, and strength and my neighbor as myself. Only when my spirit governs my body to be morally clean can I be queen of my body.



*Anne Soiminen, 20,
Joensuu Branch,
Kuopio Finland District*

I try not to be judgmental but to make it clear to my friends that there is nothing I cherish more than to be a virtuous woman.



*Ama Dapaab, 23,
Ola University Ward,
Cape Coast Ghana Stake*

If questions arise, I talk about the Ten Commandments. I explain also that sexual immorality is second only to murder in seriousness (see Alma 39:5). My friends are always surprised,

but I explain that the Lord gives us commandments for our happiness and that the obedient receive blessings.



*Irina Kutsenko, 19,
Voronezh Levoberezhny
Branch,
Russia Moscow South Mission*

We can set an example by keeping our thoughts and actions clean, dressing modestly, and using appropriate speech. We can teach others that clean lives will allow us to stand blameless before God at the last day.



*Elder Tagiape'a Magalo, 27,
Samoa Apia Mission*

Before my mission my friends had many conversations about how to break this law. There were almost never conversations about how to flee from sin. But I have learned that we can teach others that our thoughts have to be pure so our acts will be pure. The Lord will give us the words we need.



*Elder Otto E. Visoni O., 20,
Honduras San Pedro
Sula Mission*

The Apostle Paul said: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Our bodies do not belong

to us. We must take good care of them by living the law of chastity.



*Tabia Mou-Fa, 16,
Uturoa Ward,
Raromatai Tabiti Stake*

I try to share positive thoughts on chastity. I share advice given by parents and Church leaders and also scriptures that teach about this law.



*Makeleta Fonua, 18,
Matabau Second Ward,
Nuku'alofa Tonga
Ha'akame Stake*

Questions and Answers is a youth feature, and we hope to print a wide selection of youth answers from a variety of countries. Please mail your answer to arrive no later than 1 March 2003. Send it to Questions and Answers 03/03, Liabona, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to cur-liabona-imag@ldschurch.org. Your answer may be typed or clearly written in your own language. It must include your full name, age, home address, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself; this photograph will not be returned.

QUESTION: My dad is very busy. With school, friends, and Church activities, I am gone a lot too. What can I do to stay close to my dad and enjoy a good relationship when we hardly see each other? ■

Prepare Every Needful Thing

Prayerfully select and read from this message the scriptures and teachings that meet the needs of the sisters you visit. Share your experiences and testimony. Invite those you teach to do the same.

D&C 88:119: The Lord gave counsel to the Saints building the Kirtland Temple that also applies to building righteous lives and righteous families today: “Prepare every needful thing.”

How do we determine what is “needful,” or of highest priority, as we prepare ourselves and our families?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Jesus taught about priorities when He said, ‘Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to

establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you’ (JST, Matt. 6:38, in Matt. 6:33, footnote a). ‘Seek . . . first to build up the kingdom of God’ means to assign first priority to God and to His work. The work of God is to bring to pass the eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39), and all that this entails in the birth, nurturing, teaching, and sealing of our Heavenly Father’s children. Everything else is lower in priority” (“Focus and Priorities,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 100–101).

Patricia T. Holland, former first counselor in the Young Women general presidency: “On a beautifully clear and bright day, I sat overlooking the Sea of Galilee. I opened my Bible and turned to the account in Luke of Martha, a woman like me ‘troubled about many things.’ But instead of the words printed on the page before me, I thought I saw with my mind and heard with my heart these words: ‘Pat, Pat, thou [art] careful and troubled about many things.’ Then the power of pure and personal revelation took hold of me as I read, ‘But one thing, [only one thing] is truly needful.’ (See Luke 10:38–42.) . . .

“Spirit to spirit, our loving Father in heaven seemed to be whispering to me, ‘You don’t have to worry over

so many things. The one thing that is needful—the only thing that is truly needful—is to keep your eyes toward my Son.’

“‘Learn of me,’ he seemed to say, ‘and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.’ (D&C 19:23.)” (“But One Thing Is Truly Needful,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1988, 35).

How can we avoid distractions as we prepare ourselves and our families?

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Some places are sacred and holy where it seems easier to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit. The temple is such a place. Find a retreat of peace and quiet where periodically you can ponder and let the Lord establish the direction of your life. Each of us needs to periodically check our bearings and confirm that we are on course. Sometime soon you may benefit from taking this personal inventory:

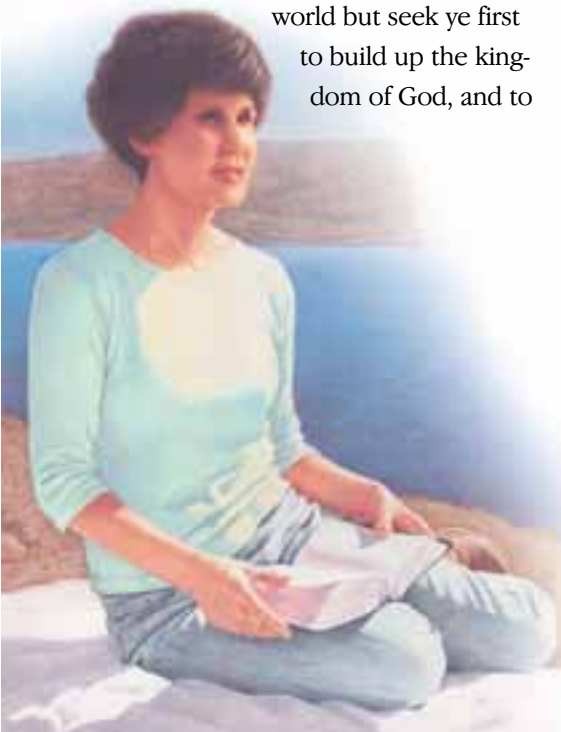
“What are my highest priorities to be accomplished while on earth?”

“How do I use my discretionary time? Is some of it consistently applied to my highest priorities?”

“Is there anything I know I should not be doing? If so, I will repent and stop it now.”

“In a quiet moment write down your responses. Analyze them. Make any necessary adjustments.

“Put first things first” (“First Things First,” *Liabona*, July 2001, 9). ■





WORDS
OF
JESUS

Forgiveness

“Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).



BY ELDER CECIL O. SAMUELSON JR.
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

It is the Savior’s desire that we each feel His peace. He said: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). In these troubled times, a familiar hymn assures us:

*Sweet is the peace the gospel brings
To seeking minds and true.
With light refulgent on its wings
It clears the human view.¹*

We may have much that worries us, and we may find many reasons to be concerned. Yet, as President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) observed, peace and the Savior’s doctrine of forgiveness are inseparably connected: “The essence . . . of forgiveness is that it brings peace to the previously anxious, restless, frustrated, perhaps tormented soul.”²

Luke records a story from the life of the Savior that demonstrates the kind of peace the Savior bestows when we receive His forgiveness (see Luke 7:36–50). Jesus was invited to the home of Simon, a Pharisee, for dinner. A woman who is described as a sinner learned that Jesus was in the house

and came, bringing ointment. As Jesus rested, leaning forward on a couch with His feet extended away from the table, the woman approached Him from behind, weeping and washing His feet with her tears. She wiped His feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the fragrant ointment on them, taking care to gently rub the oil into His feet. The host found fault with Jesus for accepting this act of kindness from a sinner. Jesus perceived his thoughts and offered for his chastisement one of His most poignant lessons on the doctrine of forgiveness.

He told the story of a creditor who had two debtors. One owed 10 times more than the other. Neither had the means to pay his debt, so the creditor graciously forgave them both. “Tell me therefore,” the Savior asked, “which of [the debtors] will love [the creditor] most?” (Luke 7:42). Simon rightly answered that the debtor who owed the most would probably love the most.

Jesus then compared Simon’s lack of care and hospitality for Him to the woman’s actions. The Master wanted Simon to see himself in the story as the debtor who owed less and the woman as the debtor who owed

Our understanding that we owe a great debt to our Heavenly King unlocks the door to the gifts of repentance and forgiveness.



LEFT: DETAIL FROM CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUE, BY GUSTAVE DORÉ; RIGHT: SEEST THOU THIS WOMAN, BY CRYSTAL HAUETER

more. Jesus reinforced His point by saying, “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47).

Jesus then turned His attention to the woman. Looking her in the eyes, He bestowed His peace upon her, saying: “Thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:48, 50).

We do not know the circumstances surrounding this woman’s transgressions, but we can imagine the gratitude, joy, and peace she must have felt at that moment.

Peace in Christ

We must look to the Savior, not the wisdom of the world, for peace and forgiveness. You may recall the story of the man with palsy

who was paralyzed (see Matthew 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26).

The Savior was in Capernaum, teaching in a house crowded to overflowing. Four men came carrying their disabled friend on a stretcher, hoping Jesus would heal him. Because of the great congestion at the door, the men carried him to the roof, made an opening, and carefully lowered the palsied sufferer into the room where Jesus was. Jesus was not irritated by this interruption but was touched by their faith. He boldly and publicly said to the sick man, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9:2) and admonished him to sin no more (see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 9:2).

As the man still lay on his bed, some of the scribes and Pharisees thought to themselves that Jesus had just committed the sin of

Jesus offered one of His most poignant lessons on forgiveness when He said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

blasphemy (see Bible Dictionary, “Blasphemy,” 625–26). He confronted their faithless minds by asking if it requires more power to forgive sins than to heal the sick (see Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 5:23). The Savior said that so His listeners would “know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins” (Matthew 9:6; see Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 9:6).

Jesus then turned to the palsied man and declared, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house” (Mark 2:11). And immediately he arose and did as he was commanded. The complainers and critics could not dispute the obvious miracle and its clear implication: Jesus has the power to forgive sins. And “good cheer” or peace results when we know that our sins have truly been forgiven by Him.

Forgiving Others

When the Master taught His disciples what to do when they felt offended or received trespasses (see Matthew 18:15–35), it seemed to them to be a new doctrine. “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Matthew 18:15). The Savior’s words about forgiving others required a significant adjustment in attitude. They had been schooled in the notion of “an eye for an eye” (Matthew 5:38; see Leviticus 24:20). Peter, wanting to be sure he understood the meaning of the teaching, asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Matthew 18:21). Peter was probably aware of the rabbinical requirement that the offender make the first move to resolve the offense and that the offended person forgive only two or three times.³

Jesus answered with clarity, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22). In other words, there must be no constraints, numerical or otherwise, placed on our forgiveness of others.

The Savior then told His disciples a parable so that they might more fully appreciate, remember, and apply the lesson that we must forgive everyone (see Matthew 18:23–32). He described a king who wanted to settle his

accounts with his servants who owed him money. The first servant owed him 10,000 talents, which would probably be the modern equivalent of millions of U.S. dollars. The servant was not able to repay the debt, so the king ordered him and his family to be sold into slavery. The desperate servant petitioned for time and patience, promising to pay all. Touched by his sincerity, the king was moved with compassion and forgave his very large debt. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshiped him.

This same servant, who had just been the recipient of the king’s wonderful act of mercy and forgiveness, immediately went in search of a fellow servant who owed him 100 pence, the probable equivalent of a few U.S. dollars. He rudely demanded immediate payment. When the fellow servant pleaded for time and patience, the first servant was not willing to extend what he had just freely received from the king. He had his fellow servant cast into prison until he could pay the debt. This callous act was observed by other servants and duly reported to the king. “And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.” Jesus then added this postscript, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:34–35).

Those who wish to consider themselves as disciples of the Master must understand that we, like the first servant, owe a great debt to our Heavenly King for the many gifts we have received from Him. This understanding unlocks the door to the gifts of repentance and our own forgiveness. The retention of these gifts depends upon our faithful forgiveness of those who have offended us. The Savior said, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7) and, “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged” (Matthew 7:2).

Forgiving others, however, does not necessarily mean that we would endorse or approve of the behavior or transgression. In fact, there are many actions and attitudes that deserve clear condemnation. But even in these we must completely forgive the offender. “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

All Sins but One

The Savior was very clear that, conditioned on repentance, all of our sins can be forgiven through His sacred and atoning sacrifice except for what He called “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 12:31; see also Mark 3:28–29). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught on this subject: “Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him.”⁴

Thus, the clear assurance of the Redeemer is that “all sins shall be forgiven” (Mark 3:28) when we repent, for the Savior’s mission was to preach repentance (see Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 3:22; see also Mosiah 26:29–30).

The Gift of Forgiveness

The Savior taught His disciples on two separate occasions that they were to pray for forgiveness of sins or debts to God. We are also to demonstrate the sincerity of our prayers by forgiving those who have sinned against us. He instructed them to pray, “Forgive us our debts [offenses], as we forgive our debtors [those who have offended us]” (Matthew 6:12) and, “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us” (Luke 11:4). Implicit in this teaching is a direct link between pleading for forgiveness and our efforts to repent of all our sins.

In all our forgiving and seeking forgiveness, we must recognize that, despite whatever restitution we may be capable of providing or receiving, our efforts and those of others are woefully insufficient to meet the demands of eternal justice. How, then, is true



forgiveness possible? Paul, in speaking to the Ephesians, wrote that it is in Christ that “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

The blessings that flow from the gift of forgiveness are many. Chief among them is peace. It is the Savior’s desire that we each feel His peace. He said: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The forgiveness we offer to others and the forgiveness we receive from Jesus Christ lead us to Him and along the path to eternal life. ■

NOTES

1. *Hymns*, no. 14.
2. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 363.
3. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 391–93.
4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 358.

When a disabled man’s friends lowered him into the room where Jesus was, the Savior taught His listeners that He has the power to forgive sins, boldly declaring, “Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”

The Parable of the Seed

Growing Secretly



In the Savior's parable the sower plants in faith and harvests in joy.

BY ELDER WILFREDO R. LÓPEZ
Area Authority Seventy

My grandfather was a farmer. When I was quite young, I used to go to work with him at planting time. I loved to see him get the animals ready, put on their yokes, and hitch them to the harrow and plow. “Where are we going to plant today?” I would ask. “Down yonder,” he would reply. He knew well where the fruitful ground was.

I loved the moist, rich smell that rose from the ground when the tip of the plow broke the earth. As my grandfather prepared the furrows, I would bury the seed. “This ground is *fruitful*,” he would say. Later we would go back to the field to see the first green sprouts coming up. Soon the shoots became stalks, and then the grain would appear. The plants continued to grow until they were mature.



At harvesttime, the workers would cut the sheaves and take them to the threshing area, which consisted of poles wired together into a large circle. The sheaves were placed on the ground around the outside of this circle. Then the horses came and ran around the circle, trampling the sheaves, which loosened the grain from the stalks and crushed the kernels. Next, workers came with their tools to



fan the chaff, separating it from the grain. After their labor was done, the workers sang and danced and enjoyed a traditional meal of roast lamb. It was a beautiful rustic celebration. The grain was stored in sacks and later processed into a variety of useful products.

And yet, despite all that we did to plant and harvest, the success of the whole process was primarily based upon the richness of the ground, the weather, and other conditions beyond our control. Without these

conditions, the seeds would not have germinated, and there would have been no harvest.

The Savior's Parable

During Jesus' ministry in Galilee, a great multitude gathered by the seaside to hear Him teach. He spoke to them of a sower who planted seeds in different kinds of earth—stony, thorny, and fertile—and received different amounts of fruit.

He then taught them another parable, recorded only in

the testimony of Mark, that focuses on what causes a plant to grow. He said:

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

“And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should . . . grow up, he knoweth not how.

“For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

“But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:26–29).

In this parable the sower plants in faith and harvests in joy. Once the planting is done, he simply awakes one day to find that his seeds have grown to maturity. He discovers that under the influence of the soil’s richness and the sun, rain, wind, and dew, as well as other factors he cannot manipulate, the leaf sprouts and the ear is formed.¹

Spiritual Growth

An important lesson of this parable is for those of us who are teachers, whether in the home or Church classroom, or who are involved in missionary work. The germination and full flowering of living gospel seeds in the hearts and minds of those we teach depend on factors over which we may have little control. The choice of whether a person will ponder and accept the truths of the gospel belongs, as a matter of personal agency, with those we teach. If a person’s testimony is to grow until it bears mature fruit, or conversion, God must be the primary force behind our harvest. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we may participate in the education of those who are growing and becoming fruitful. We, as authorized sowers, need to understand and trust that

the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is a living seed and that if we will teach it, the grace of God will attend those we teach, as they grow to spiritual maturity and bring forth good works. Our joy will then be full in the day of the harvest.

When I was a mission leader in the Independencia Ward in Santiago, Chile, we focused on inviting the influence of the Spirit into the lives of the new converts.

From that period of time in that ward have come some of Chile’s great priesthood leaders: seven stake presidents, two mission presidents, two regional representatives, one member of a temple presidency, and a great many bishops.

Why was the harvest so successful? It came from the fruitfulness of the ground, and it came from God. Therefore, the joy I feel comes from knowing that “the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself” (Mark 4:28). A favorite hymn reminds us that when we are planting for the Master, we do not labor alone. Indeed, when we seek to sow precious seeds of gospel truth, we can be assured of divine help:

*Thou who knowest all our weakness,
Leave us not to sow alone!
Bid thine angels guard the furrows
Where the precious grain is sown,
Till the fields are crown’d with glory,
Filled with mellow, ripened ears,
Filled with fruit of life eternal
From the seed we sowed in tears.² ■*

Elder Wilfredo R. López is an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Chile Area.

NOTES

1. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 289.
2. “We Are Sowing,” *Hymns*, no. 216.



The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is a living seed and if we will teach it, the grace of God will attend those we teach.

A photograph of a globe, a chain, and a broken metal band on a wooden surface. The globe is in the background, slightly out of focus. A heavy metal chain lies across the middle ground. In the foreground, a metal band, possibly a handcuff or a collar, is broken into two pieces. The scene is lit from the side, creating strong shadows and highlights on the wooden surface.

KEEP YOURSELF **FREE**

IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL,
THE WORLD WILL SELL YOU THINGS
UNTIL IT OWNS YOU.
(See Matthew 6:19–21.)

WAKE.

Through seminary, the Book of Mormon became easier to read and understand. It was not long before I received my own witness the book was true.

Get up at 4:30 A.M. to attend seminary? I wasn't even a member of the Church. Still, I had nothing to lose and a whole lot to gain.

BY ISAAC KOFI MORRISON

When I was 17, I went to live with my aunt and uncle, who were sponsoring my education. When I arrived at their home in Sekondi, Ghana, I immediately noticed unusual things about their family. They had morning and evening prayers together and held family meetings on Monday evenings that seemed to make each family member feel loved and appreciated. Even though I was an active member of another faith, I became interested in finding out about their beliefs.

When I asked Uncle Sarfo about the Church, he explained many of the Church's teachings. Some I believed, and others I did not understand.

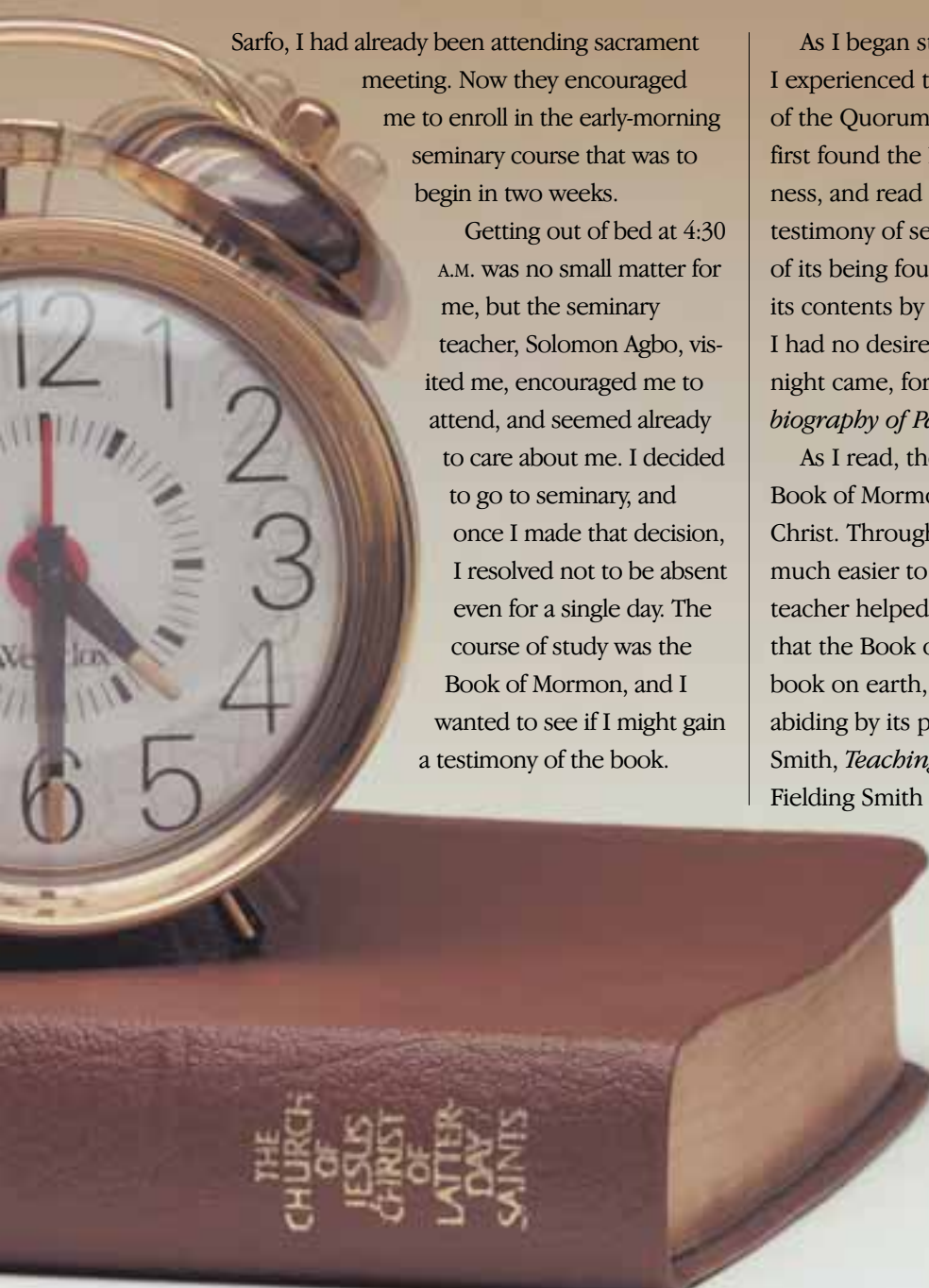
My uncle then asked the missionaries to teach me the discussions, and I received all six of the

lessons. But when the missionaries invited me to be baptized, I refused because I did not have a testimony of the Book of Mormon. I found it difficult to read and understand.

To please Aunt Evelyn and Uncle



UP CALL



Sarfo, I had already been attending sacrament meeting. Now they encouraged me to enroll in the early-morning seminary course that was to begin in two weeks.

Getting out of bed at 4:30 A.M. was no small matter for me, but the seminary teacher, Solomon Agbo, visited me, encouraged me to attend, and seemed already to care about me. I decided to go to seminary, and once I made that decision, I resolved not to be absent even for a single day. The course of study was the Book of Mormon, and I wanted to see if I might gain a testimony of the book.

As I began studying the Book of Mormon for seminary, I experienced the feelings Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described when he first found the Book of Mormon. “I opened it with eagerness, and read its title page,” he wrote. “I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [1985], 18).

As I read, the Spirit of the Lord bore witness that the Book of Mormon is truly another testament of Jesus Christ. Through seminary the Book of Mormon became much easier to read. Whenever it was hard to follow, my teacher helped me understand. I received a testimony that the Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on earth, . . . and a man [will] get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 194).

I was baptized on 5 March 1995. By the time I was 21 I was a seminary teacher myself, helping others know of the divinity and truthfulness of the book that changed my life. ■

Isaac Kofi Morrison is a full-time missionary in the Nigeria Uyo Mission.

Three Parables

The Unwise Bee, the Owl Express, and Two Lamps

BY ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE (1862–1933)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Three stories from Elder James E. Talmage's own experience teach us to trust in the Lord's perspective.

Elder Talmage served as an Apostle for 22 years and wrote two books for the Church that are in wide use to this day, *Jesus the Christ* and *The Articles of Faith*. Beginning in January 1914 Elder Talmage also published a series of parables, stories taken from his personal experience that teach gospel principles. Following are three of his choicest ones.

The Parable of the Unwise Bee

Sometimes I find myself under obligations of work requiring quiet and seclusion such as neither my comfortable office nor the cozy study at home insures. My favorite retreat is an upper room in the tower of a large building, well removed from the noise and confusion of the city streets. The room is somewhat difficult of access and relatively secure against human intrusion. Therein I have spent many peaceful and busy hours with books and pen.

I am not always without visitors, however, especially in summertime; for when I sit with windows open, flying insects occasionally find entrance and share the place with me. These self-invited guests are not unwelcome. Many a time I have laid down the pen and, forgetful of my theme, have watched with interest the

activities of these winged visitants, with an afterthought that the time so spent had not been wasted, for is it not true that even a butterfly, a beetle, or a bee may be a bearer of lessons to the receptive student?

A wild bee from the neighboring hills once flew into the room, and at intervals during an hour or more I caught the pleasing hum of its flight. The little creature realized that it was a prisoner, yet all its efforts to find the exit through the partly opened casement failed. When ready to close up the room and leave, I threw the window wide and tried at first to guide and then to drive the bee to liberty and safety, knowing well that if left in the room it would die as other insects there entrapped had perished in the dry atmosphere of the enclosure. The more I tried to drive it out, the more determinedly did it oppose and resist my efforts. Its erstwhile peaceful hum developed into an angry roar; its darting flight became hostile and threatening.

Then it caught me off my guard and stung my hand—the hand that would have guided it to freedom. At last it alighted on a pendant attached to the ceiling, beyond my reach of help or injury. The sharp pain of its unkind sting aroused in me rather pity than anger. I knew the inevitable penalty of its mistaken

opposition and defiance, and I had to leave the creature to its fate. Three days later I returned to the room and found the dried, lifeless body of the bee on the writing table. It had paid for its stubbornness with its life.


To the bee's shortsightedness and selfish misunderstanding I was a foe, a persistent persecutor, a mortal enemy bent on its destruction; while in truth I was its friend, offering it ransom of the life it had put in forfeit through its own error, striving to redeem it, in spite of itself, from the prison house of death and restore it to the outer air of liberty.

Are we so much wiser than the bee that no analogy lies between its unwise course and our lives? We are prone to contend, sometimes with vehemence and anger, against the adversity which after all may be the manifestation of

superior wisdom and loving care, directed against our temporary comfort for our permanent blessing. In the tribulations and sufferings of mortality there is a divine ministry which only the godless soul can wholly fail to discern. To many the loss of wealth has been a boon, a providential means of leading or driving them from the confines of selfish indulgence to the sunshine and the open, where boundless opportunity waits on effort. Disappointment, sorrow, and affliction may be the expression of an all-wise Father's kindness.

Consider the lesson of the unwise bee!

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).



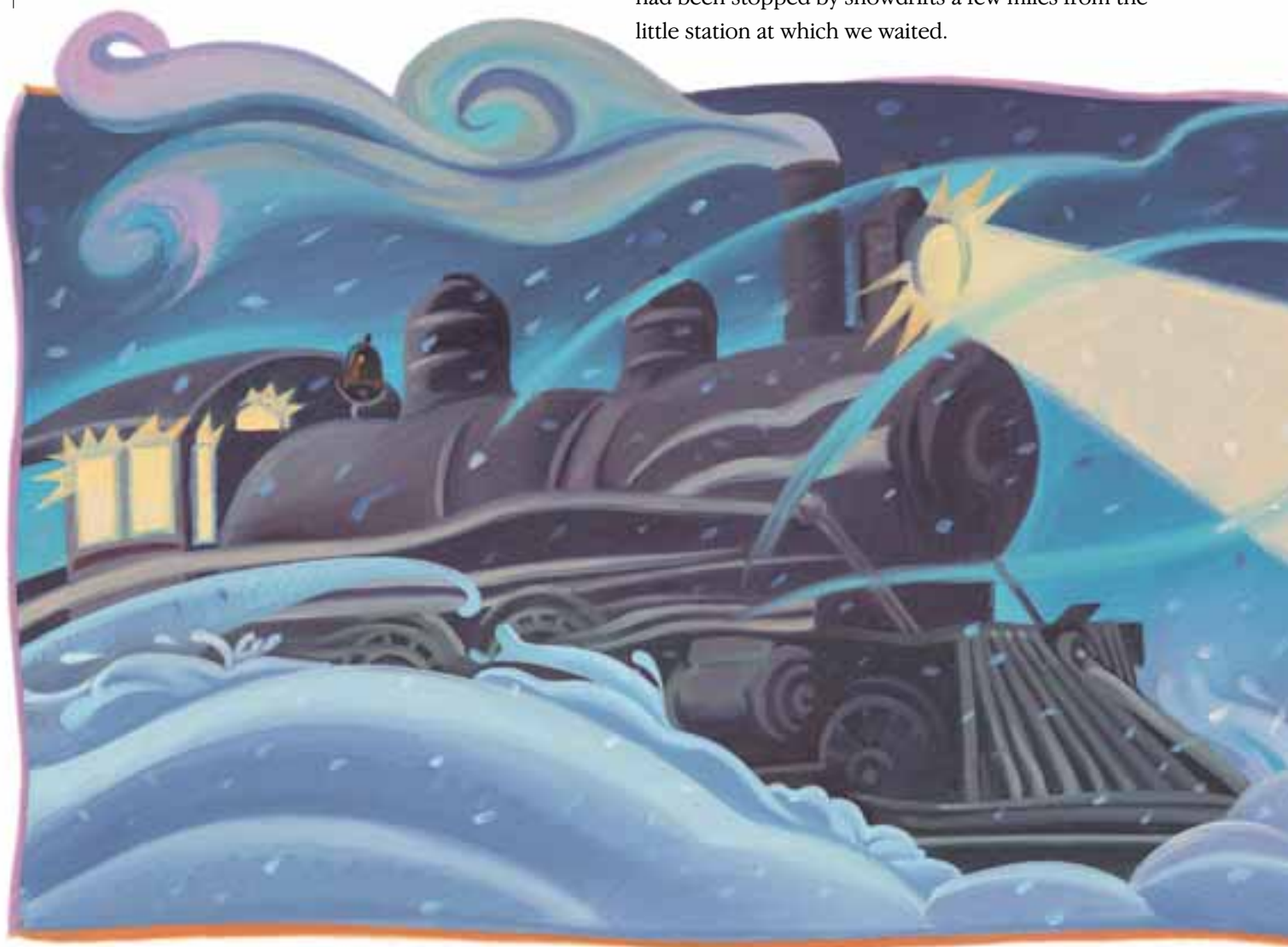
T*o the bee's shortsightedness and selfish misunderstanding I was a foe; while in truth I was its friend, offering it ransom of the life it had put in forfeit.*

The Parable of the Owl Express

During my college days, I was one of a class of students appointed to fieldwork as a part of our prescribed courses in geology—the science that deals with the earth in all of its varied aspects and phases, but more particularly with its component rocks, the structural features they present, the changes they have undergone and are undergoing—the science of worlds.

A certain assignment had kept us in the field many days. We had traversed, examined, and charted miles of lowlands and uplands, valleys and hills, mountain heights and canyon defiles. As the time allotted to the

investigation drew near its close, we were overtaken by a violent windstorm, followed by a heavy snow—unseasonable and unexpected, but which, nevertheless, increased in intensity so that we were in danger of being snowbound in the hills. The storm reached its height while we were descending a long and steep mountainside several miles from the little railway station at which we had hoped to take [a] train that night for home. With great effort we reached the station late at night while the storm was yet raging. We were suffering from the intense cold incident to biting wind and driving snow; and, to add to our discomfiture, we learned that the expected train had been stopped by snowdrifts a few miles from the little station at which we waited.



. . . The train for which we so expectantly and hopefully waited was the Owl Express—a fast night train connecting large cities. Its time schedule permitted stops at but few and these the most important stations; but, as we knew, it had to stop at this out-of-the-way post to replenish the water supply of the locomotive.

Long after midnight the train arrived in a terrific whirl of wind and snow. I lingered behind my companions as they hurriedly clambered aboard, for I was attracted by the engineer, who during the brief stop, while his assistant was attending to the water replenishment, bustled about the engine, oiling some parts, adjusting others, and generally

In effect the engineer said: “Look at the engine headlight. Doesn’t that light up the track for a hundred yards or more? Well, all I try to do is to cover that hundred yards of lighted track. That I can see, and for that distance I know the roadbed is open and safe.”

overhauling the panting locomotive. I ventured to speak to him, busy though he was. I asked how he felt on such a night—wild, weird, and furious, when the powers of destruction seemed to be let loose, abroad and uncontrolled, when the storm was howling and when danger threatened from every side. I thought of the possibility—the probability even—of snowdrifts or slides on the track, of bridges and high trestles which may have been loosened by the storm, of rock masses dislodged from the mountainside—of these and other possible obstacles. I realized that in the event of accident through obstruction on or disruption of the track, the engineer and the fireman would be the ones most exposed to danger; a violent collision would most likely cost them their lives. All of these

thoughts and others I expressed in hasty questioning of the bustling, impatient engineer.

His answer was a lesson not yet forgotten. In effect he said, though in jerky and disjointed sentences: “Look at the engine headlight. Doesn’t that light up the track for a hundred yards [90 m] or more? Well, all I try to do is to cover that hundred yards of lighted track. That I can see, and for that distance I know the roadbed is open and safe. And,” he added, with what, through the swirl and the dim lamplighted darkness of the roaring night, I saw was a humorous smile on his lips and a merry twinkle of his eye, “believe me, I have never been able to drive this old engine of mine—God bless her!—so fast as to outstrip that hundred yards of lighted track. The light of the engine is always ahead of me!”

As he climbed to his place in the cab, I hastened to board the first passenger coach; and as I sank into the cushioned seat, in blissful enjoyment of the warmth and general comfort, offering strong contrast to the wildness of the night without, I thought deeply of the words of the grimy, oil-stained engineer. They were full of

faith—the faith that accomplishes great things, the faith that gives courage and determination, the faith that leads to works. What if the engineer had failed, had yielded to fright and fear, had refused to go on because of the threatening dangers? Who knows what work may have been hindered, what great plans may have been nullified, what God-appointed commissions of mercy and relief may have been thwarted had the engineer weakened and quailed?

For a little distance the storm-swept track was lighted up; for that short space the engineer drove on!

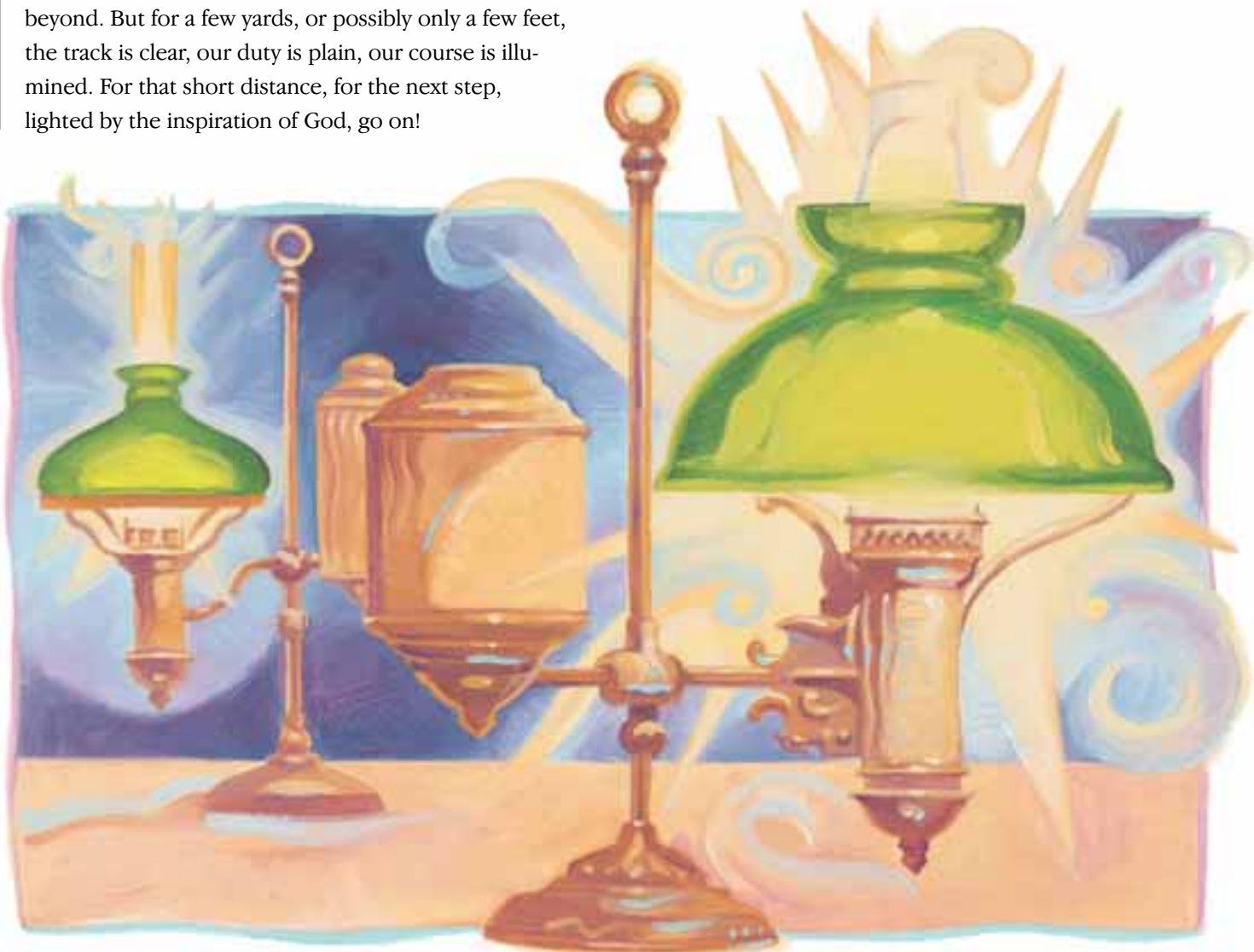
We may not know what lies ahead of us in the future years, nor even in the days or hours immediately beyond. But for a few yards, or possibly only a few feet, the track is clear, our duty is plain, our course is illumined. For that short distance, for the next step, lighted by the inspiration of God, go on!

The Parable of Two Lamps

Among the material things of the past—things that I treasure for sweet memory's sake and because of pleasant association in bygone days—is a lamp. . . .

The lamp of which I speak, the student lamp of my school and college days, was one of the best of its kind. I had bought it with hard-earned savings; it was counted among my most cherished possessions. . . .

One summer evening I sat musing studiously and withal restfully in the open air outside the door of the room in which I lodged and studied. A stranger approached. I noticed that he carried a satchel. He was affable and entertaining. I brought another chair from



within, and we chatted together till the twilight had deepened into dusk, the dusk into darkness.

Then he said: "You are a student and doubtless have much work to do of nights. What kind of lamp do you use?" And without waiting for a reply, he continued, "I have a superior kind of lamp I should like to show you, a lamp designed and constructed according to the latest achievements of applied science, far surpassing anything heretofore produced as a means of artificial lighting."

I replied with confidence, and I confess, not without some exultation: "My friend, I have a lamp, one that has been tested and proved. It has been to me a companion through many a long night. It is an Argand lamp, and one of the best. I have trimmed and cleaned it today; it is ready for the lighting. Step inside; I will show you my lamp; then you may tell me whether yours can possibly be better."

We entered my study room, and with a feeling which I assume is akin to that of the athlete about to enter a contest with one whom he regards as a pitifully inferior opponent, I put the match to my well-trimmed Argand.

My visitor was voluble in his praise. It was the best lamp of its kind, he said. He averred that he had never seen a lamp in better trim. He turned the wick up and down and pronounced the adjustment perfect. He declared that never before had he realized how satisfactory a student lamp could be.

I liked the man; he seemed to me wise, and he assuredly was ingratiating. "Love me, love my lamp," I thought, mentally paraphrasing a common expression of the period.

"Now," said he, "with your permission I'll light my lamp." He took from his satchel a lamp then known as the "Rochester." It had a chimney which, compared with mine, was as a factory smokestack alongside a house flue. Its hollow wick was wide enough to admit my four fingers. Its light made bright the remotest corner of my room. In its brilliant blaze my own little Argand wick burned a

weak, pale yellow. Until that moment of convincing demonstration, I had never known the dim obscurity in which I had lived and labored, studied and struggled.

"I'll buy your lamp," said I; "you need neither explain nor argue further." I took my new acquisition to the laboratory that same night and determined its capacity. It

turned at over 48 candlepower—fully four times the intensity of my student lamp.

Two days after purchasing, I met the lamp peddler on the street about noon-time. To my inquiry he replied that business was good; the demand for his lamps was greater than the factory supply. "But," said I, "you are not working today?" His rejoinder was a lesson. "Do you think that I would be so foolish as to go around trying to sell lamps in the daytime? Would you have bought one if I had lighted it for you when the sun was shining? I chose the time to show the superiority of my lamp over yours, and you were eager to

own the better one I offered, were you not?"

Such is the story. Now consider the application of a part, a very small part, thereof.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" [Matthew 5:16].

The man who would sell me a lamp did not disparage mine. He placed his greater light alongside my feebler flame, and I hastened to obtain the better.

The missionary servants of the Church of Jesus Christ today are sent forth, not to assail or ridicule the beliefs of men, but to set before the world a superior light, by which the smoky dimness of the flickering flames of man-made creeds shall be apparent. The work of the Church is constructive, not destructive.

As to the further meaning of the parable, let him that hath eyes and a heart see and understand. ■

Published in the Improvement Era, Sept. 1914, 1008-9; Jan. 1914, 256-58; July 1914, 807-9; punctuation and spelling modernized.

In the Rochester's brilliant blaze my own little Argand wick burned a weak, pale yellow. Until that moment of convincing demonstration, I had never known the dim obscurity in which I had lived and labored, studied and struggled.

A Special Witness of Jesus Christ

By Irene Coimbra de Oliveira Cláudio

When I entered the immense coliseum for regional conference, I saw beautifully arranged flowers and, even more impressive, thousands of people waiting in reverent silence. Everything seemed perfect. I found a seat and admired each detail as I quietly waited.

As a recent convert, I was experiencing my first regional conference. I was eager to worship and sing with members from all over my region of Brazil. But mostly I was anxious to see and hear an Apostle in person for the first time. I wondered what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, the visiting General Authority, would be like. Would a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles seem different from other leaders in and out of the Church? Would he really be a special witness of Jesus Christ?

Before I left for the conference, my husband, who is not a member of the Church, said to me sarcastically, “So you are going to hear an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Will he be holy?”

“I don’t know,” I answered. “I’ll tell you when I return.”

As I pondered and waited for Elder Holland to arrive, I desired to have a witness that this man was

truly an Apostle of Jesus Christ. I prayed to Heavenly Father to know how to share my experience with my husband when I returned home.

When the local leaders and General Authorities entered the room, I was unable to determine which of them was the Apostle. There was nothing about his appearance to differentiate him from the others. When I finally identified Elder Holland, I wondered to myself, “What is different about this man?”

After the opening hymn, an invocation, and remarks by our local leaders, Sister Patricia T. Holland, the Apostle’s wife, was introduced. She was assisted by an interpreter, but I felt I could understand her in her own language because she did not speak just to our ears. She spoke also to our hearts.

Following her talk Elder Holland walked to the pulpit. When he began speaking, I was surprised at how normal his words sounded. But as he talked I began to feel within myself a witness that this man truly was a representative of the Lord and that his message was true. I thought about Jesus Christ, who also appeared physically to be like other men but who had the

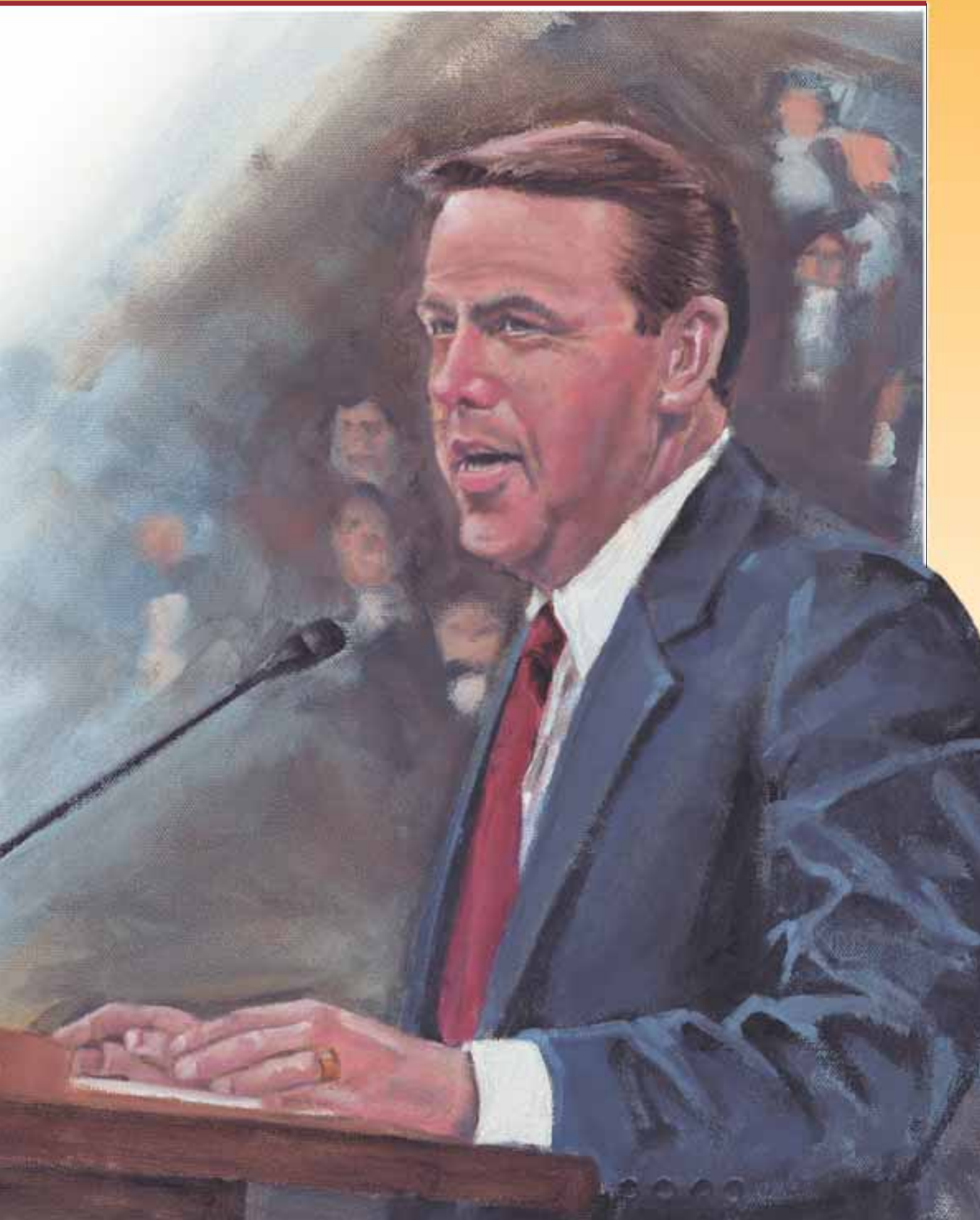
sublime mission to be the Savior of the world. As Elder Holland finished his talk, he bore testimony that Jesus Christ lives and that this is His true Church. The Spirit witnessed to me that Elder Holland had been appointed to speak in the name of the Lord and that he was truly one of the Lord’s Apostles.

When I arrived home, my husband asked, “So what kind of man was this Apostle?”

“On the outside, he seems just like any man,” I said. “But he is really much more—he is a special witness of Jesus Christ.” ■

Irene Coimbra de Oliveira Cláudio is a member of the Jardim Independência Ward, Ribeirão Preto Brazil Stake.

As Elder Holland, an Apostle, spoke I began to feel within myself a witness that this man truly was a representative of the Lord and that his message was true.



There Was No Question

By Giuseppe Martinengo

When the missionaries showed me the filmstrip of the Prophet Joseph Smith's First Vision, it was difficult for me to contain my tears. The story of his search for truth was in some ways similar to my own.

At that time, I was 20 years old and living in Italy, the land of my birth. For five years I had been looking for answers my parents' religion had not been able to give me. I had

sought these answers in other religions and philosophies, but something seemed lacking in all of them. During the year before I met the missionaries, that search had become the most important thing in my life. I distanced myself from some of my friends and even left the university where I had been studying. My relatives could not understand me.

At the end of 1984, I met the missionaries on the street and gave them my address. I knew very little about the Church, but for some reason I wanted to speak to them.

Some days later I was in my room. I opened my heart to God, asking Him to show me what He wanted me to do. As I prayed I felt a great

peace surround me. At that exact moment, the doorbell rang. When the missionaries came in, I knew they had the answers I sought.

During the second discussion, the missionaries challenged my mother and me to be baptized. Our reactions were very different. After reading a good portion of the Book of Mormon, I had fasted and prayed and received a confirmation of the truth of what the missionaries were teaching. My mother, however, did not have the slightest intention of being baptized.

When the missionaries left, my mother presented me with a difficult



choice. If I chose to be baptized, I would have to live somewhere else. For me there was no question. I knew what was right; I left my mother's home that night.

The following day the missionaries, the branch president, and I went to my mother's home to try to resolve the problem. During the discussion that followed, I accepted my mother's request to wait a month before being baptized—but I did so only out of respect for her and to prove to her that my desires were sincere.

During that month the missionaries continued teaching us. Nothing changed for my mother, and it became clear that she wanted me to again delay my baptism. But I could not wait, and on 15 February 1985—the best day of my life until then—I was baptized.

My mother was angry at my decision, and I didn't know what I was going to do. I met with my branch president, and as we prayed together, I felt inspired to ask my father's brother to let me live with his family.

My uncle agreed but on the

When the missionaries showed me the filmstrip of the First Vision, it was difficult to contain my tears. I knew it was true, and that knowledge left me with no question about what I should do.

condition that I return to the university. Soon, however, our relationship deteriorated because he did not want me to go to church or to help the missionaries. Finally, he prohibited me from leaving the house for the district conference where I was to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Once more I had to choose between a tranquil life and the gospel. For me there was no question. That Saturday I arose early, packed my clothes, and left.

It was not easy being a member of the Church, but the Lord blessed me as I made my own way without the support of my family. One of my greatest blessings came when I went to visit the home of a newly baptized couple on an assignment from the elders quorum. There I met their daughter Giovanna.

After a time Giovanna was also baptized, and we planned to be married. But on the day of our wedding a legal notice arrived stating that the marriage could not take place. My mother had found a way to prevent it. After several difficult months we resolved the matter and were married. We now have four beautiful children.

As a family we have had difficult experiences, but these experiences have strengthened our testimonies. The Lord has blessed us greatly, and He has used our trials and difficulties to guide and bless our lives. Of this there is no question. ■

Giuseppe Martinengo is a member of the Timpanogos Park Fifth Ward, Orem Utah North Stake.

A Very Special Tablecloth

By Juan Aldo Leone

In 1995 I returned from my last trip through the vast Argentina Córdoba Mission, having served as counselor to the mission president for eight unforgettable years. A new calling as president of the Villa Allende Branch was waiting for me. Twice before I had held that position in other units. As always I was grateful for the opportunity to serve. My new calling made me think about the growth of the Church in my part of Argentina; one particular experience made me even more grateful for my heritage in the gospel.

Forty years before that time, the original branch in Córdoba was divided. From that first division, a branch (now the Villa Belgrano Ward) was created west of the city. It was the basis for many other units created in subsequent years.

Each time a new branch was organized, the Villa Belgrano Ward, like the generous trunk of a robust tree, provided to the tender young shoots part of its leadership and membership and also donated whatever materials it could: a pulpit, chairs, tables, sacrament trays, and so forth. After a new branch was fully equipped, these extra items were again donated to other new branches. In this way furniture and other items

were scattered as they were put to good use.

Today the little branch in Villa Allende is a ward with a beautiful meetinghouse and an excellent young bishop. But in 1995, when I began serving as branch president, we met in a large, old rented house. One Sunday when we were meeting in the

As my counselor and I officiated at the sacrament table, I paid no particular attention to the tablecloth until the words *santa cena* brought a flood of memories to my mind.

old house, one of my counselors and I were blessing the sacrament. It had been years since I had officiated in this sacred ordinance; usually our young Aaronic Priesthood bearers enjoyed that privilege.

At first I paid no particular attention to the white tablecloth covering the sacrament trays. But as we stood to break the bread, the words *santa cena* (sacrament), beautifully embroidered and standing out in relief, made my heart beat fast and my eyes fill with tears.

In a simple, ordinary way Heavenly Father reminded me of the many blessings I had received during 60 years as a member of His true

Church. Those embroidered letters were unmistakable. Forty years before, my mother, who along with my father was a pioneer in our city, had taken a piece of linen from her trousseau and asked me to write in the middle of it the words *santa cena*. She then delicately embroidered over the letters and donated to the branch its first tablecloth.

During our years of continual growth, changes, moves, and new units, I had sometimes wondered about the tablecloth. Had it burned in the Villa Belgrano meetinghouse fire in 1979?

But here it was safely in front of me. It brought to mind so many experiences, as well as a deep well of gratitude. After so many unit divisions and hundreds of washings and ironings and after being cared for by many loving hands, it was still giving service—far from the branch where it began but still in the Church after more than 40 years.

At that faraway time when the tablecloth was first made, I was serving as a brand-new, very young branch president for the first time. Many things had changed and grown during the intervening years; many other things had remained the same. I remembered and treasured both the things that change and the things that do not as I renewed my acquaintance with that very special tablecloth. ■

Juan Aldo Leone is a member of the Villa Allende Ward, Córdoba Argentina Sierras Stake.



Did You Know?

The Lion of the Lord

For someone called “the Lion of the Lord,” President Brigham Young (1801–77) was a remarkably humble



man. One time the Prophet Joseph Smith severely rebuked Brigham Young. After the Prophet’s chastisement, everyone in the room waited for Brigham’s response. He could have defended himself or been offended, but his reply was sincerely and simply, “Joseph, what do you want me to do?”

President Young later said, “We have to humble ourselves and become like little children in our feelings—to become humble and childlike in spirit, . . . then we have the privilege of growing, of increasing in knowledge, in wisdom, and in understanding” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 179).



It Happened in February

In February 1828, Martin Harris took a copy of characters from the gold plates, as well as their translation, to Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University in New York City. According to Martin Harris’s account, Professor Anthon said the characters “were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyric, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying . . . that they were true characters. . . . I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

“He then said to me, ‘Let me see that certificate.’ I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying, that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, ‘I cannot read a sealed book.’” (*History of the Church*, 1:20).

Professor Anthon fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah, who wrote “of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed” (Isaiah 29:11).



Leadership Tip

We are most effective in our callings when we listen to the counsel of our leaders. The Lord has said, “No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things,

whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care” (D&C 12:8).

The Apostle Peter also counseled, “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). ■

Using the February 2003 *Liahona*

Discussion Ideas

• “Strengthening the Inner Self,” p. 2: President James E. Faust explains that all things are spiritual. Discuss commandments such as tithing, the Word of Wisdom, and keeping the Sabbath day holy. Ask how we are strengthened spiritually through obeying these commandments.

• “Birthday Temple Trip,” p. 8: When have you had to make a difficult choice between something you wanted to do and something Heavenly Father wanted you to do? Or between something good and something better? How did you feel after you made your choice?

• “Divine Love,” p. 12: Elder Russell M. Nelson teaches that the fullness of God’s love and blessings are available to us if we meet certain conditions. What can we do to partake of the full expression of the Lord’s love and blessings in our lives?

• “Pebble of Forgiveness,” p. F6: Ask family or class members if they have any pebbles in their shoes. If appropriate, relate an experience you have had in forgiving, emphasizing how good you felt when you forgave.



Topics in This Issue

F=*The Friend*

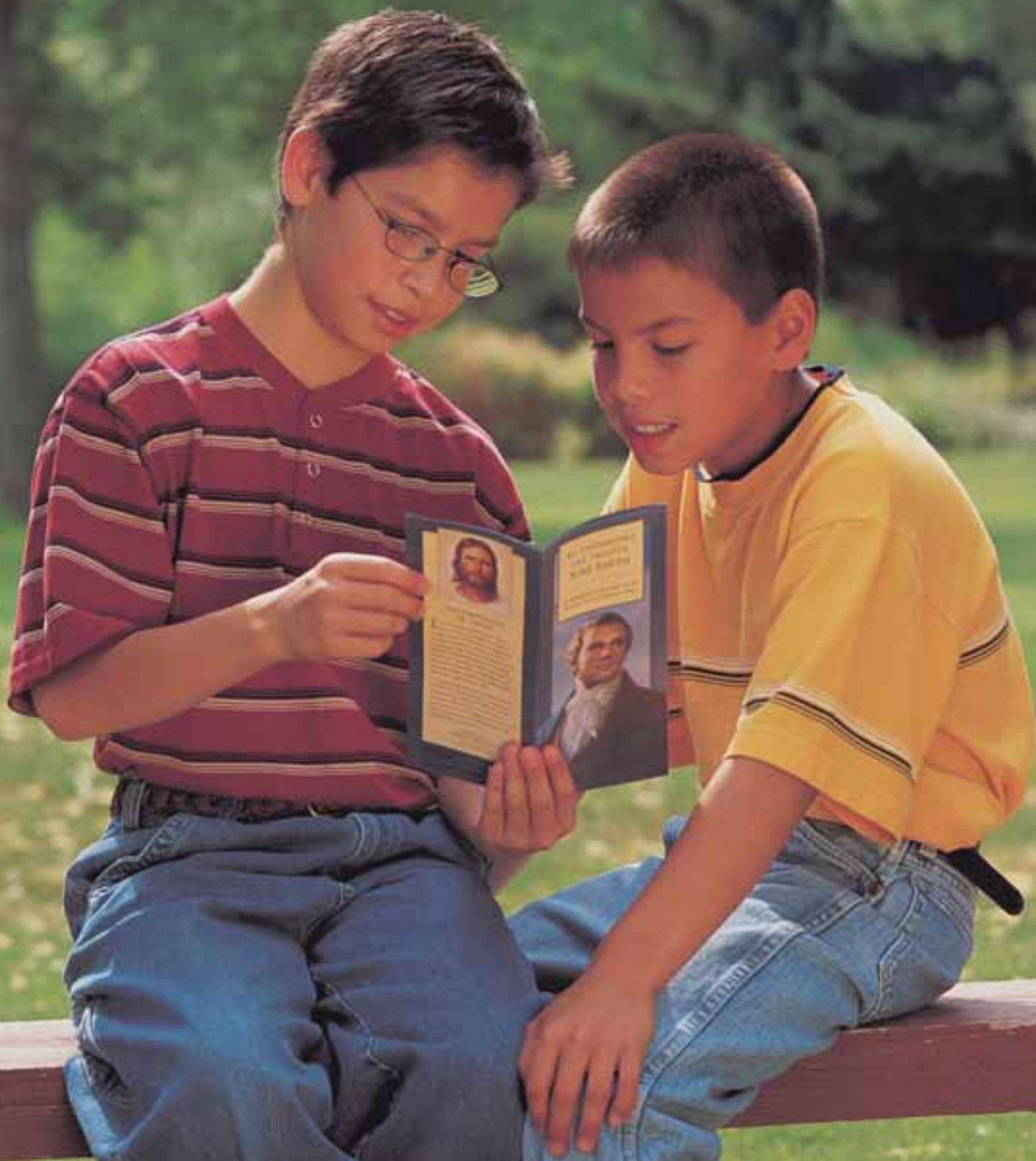
Agency	33
Apostles	42
Articles of Faith	F4
Blessings	12
Book of Mormon	34, 47
Chastity	22
Church history	47, F4, F6
Conversion	34, 42
Example	18
Faith	8, F16
Family home evening	48
Family relations	42, F6, F10
Forgiveness	26, F6
Friendship	22, F2
Holy Ghost	2, F10
Home teaching	7
Jesus Christ	26, 30, F11, F14, F16
Leadership	47, 48
Love	12
Missionary work	18, 30, F2
New Testament	26, 30, F11, F14
Obedience	12, 22
Parables	30, 36
Peace	2, 26
Preparation	25
Primary	F4
Priorities	25
Repentance	12, 26
Restoration	F2, F4
Sacrament	42, F11
Service	18, 42, F10
Smith, Joseph	F4, F6
Spirituality	2, 33
Teaching	30, 48
Temples and temple work	8, F9
Visiting teaching	25

Test Your Knowledge

See if you can match the people or things that appear together in the Savior’s parables.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Wheat | a. Bottles (see Matthew 9:17) |
| 2. Rain | b. Sand (see Matthew 7:24–27) |
| 3. Wine | c. Tares (see Matthew 13:24–30) |
| 4. Seed | d. Lazarus (see Luke 16:19–31) |
| 5. Prodigal son | e. Thorns (see Matthew 13:3–8) |
| 6. Rich man | f. Fatted calf (see Luke 15:11–32) |

the Friend



WE BEAR WITNESS of HIM



President Gordon B. Hinckley explains how we can testify of the Restoration without belittling the faith of others.

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

We worship the Lord, declare His divinity and His living reality. We reaffirm our love for Him and our knowledge of His love for us.

There are some who do not regard us as Christians. That is not important. How we regard ourselves is what is important. We acknowledge that there are differences between us. Were this not so, there would have been no need for a restoration of the gospel.

I hope we do not argue over this. We simply, quietly, and without apology testify that God has revealed Himself and His Beloved Son in opening this full and final dispensation of His work.

We must not become disagreeable as we talk of doctrinal differences. But we can never surrender that knowledge which has come to us through revelation. Let us never forget that this is a restoration of [the Savior's Church].

We can respect other religions,

and we must do so. We must recognize the great good they accomplish. We must be tolerant and friendly toward those not of our faith.

I am in receipt of a letter from a man who is not a member of the Church. He says that his little daughter has been [purposely left out of things] by her school-mates who are Latter-day Saints. He sets forth another instance of a child who had a religious medal ripped from his neck by a Latter-day Saint child. I hope this is not true. If it is, I apologize to those who have been offended.

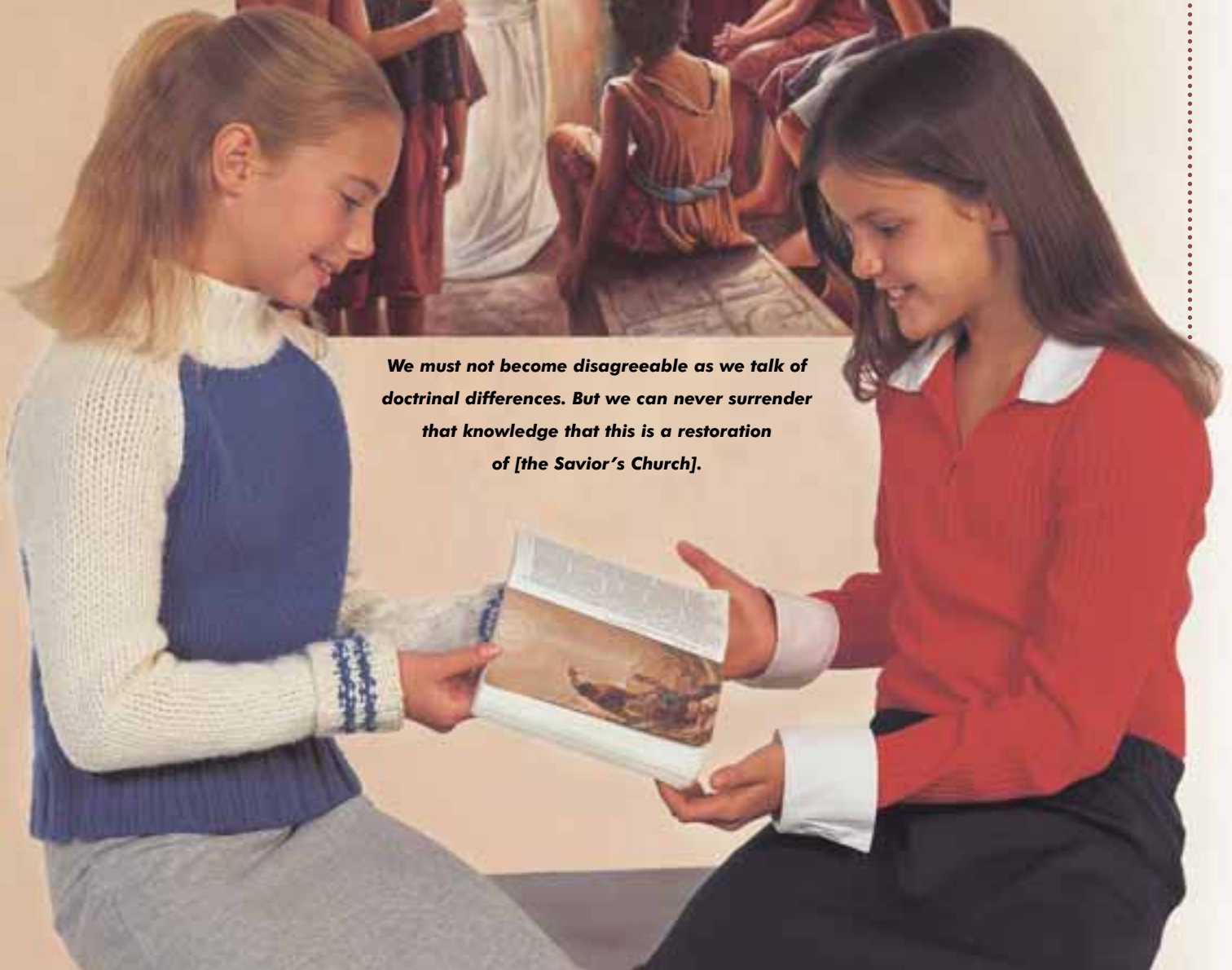
Let us rise above all such conduct. Let us be true disciples of the Christ, observing the Golden Rule, doing unto others as we would have them do unto us.

How grateful I am for the testimony with which God has blessed me of the divine calling of Joseph Smith, of the reality of the First Vision, of the restoration of the priesthood, of the truth of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ●

From an April 1998 general conference address.



We must not become disagreeable as we talk of doctrinal differences. But we can never surrender that knowledge that this is a restoration of [the Savior's Church].



The Gospel Is Restored

BY VICKI F. MATSUMORI

“For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (D&C 115:4).



What things do you think you will remember from Primary after you leave it? A favorite song? A special scripture story? One of the gospel standards?

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says that in Primary he learned the names of all the Apostles serving then, as well as all the Articles of Faith. When he tried to remember them as an adult, he says, “I discovered I could still name the Twelve Apostles. . . . [But] after the first five articles of faith, I had trouble remembering their order and their full content.”

So Elder Perry again studied the Articles of Faith, and as he did he had “a deep conviction . . . that they were given by revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

The Prophet Joseph wrote a letter to John Wentworth, a newspaper editor. The Prophet wrote about many things that happened when the gospel was restored. He told about the First Vision and about translating the Book of Mormon. Then he wrote the Articles of Faith—13 statements explaining Latter-day Saints’ beliefs.

Elder Perry promises: “If you will use [the Articles of Faith] as a guide to direct your studies of the Savior’s doctrine, you will find yourselves prepared to declare your witness of the restored, true church of the Lord. You will be able to declare with conviction: ‘We believe these things.’” (“The Articles of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 22–24).

Articles of Faith Matching Game




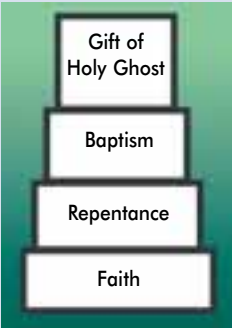








Mount page 5 on heavy paper. Cut out each card. As you memorize an article of faith, find the corresponding

picture card. Play a matching game by placing the cards facedown on a flat surface. Take turns turning over two cards to try to make a match.

Sharing Time Ideas

1. To help the children learn about the blessings of the Restoration, review some of the events recounted in *Joseph Smith—History*. Invite four people to come dressed in simple costumes and portray Joseph Smith’s friends or family members. Have each tell about an event as if Joseph had told them about it, using the scriptures as appropriate. Divide the children into four groups, and using stations (see Teaching, No Greater Call [1999], 179), have the groups rotate and listen to each visitor testify about the truths revealed because of an event: the First Vision (*Joseph Smith—History* 1:14–17); the need for the Restoration (*Joseph Smith—History* 1:18–19); receiving and translating the Book of Mormon (*Joseph Smith—History* 1:59–60); the restoration of the priesthood (*Joseph Smith—History* 1:68–72). Sing songs or hymns about Joseph Smith, the First Vision, the Book of Mormon, and the priesthood.

2. To help the children understand the blessing of having the priesthood of God restored to the earth, have them read aloud together 1 Peter 2:9. Discuss the blessings and obligations that come from being “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” Place these wordstrips in a container: BLESSING A BABY, BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, BLESSING THE SACRAMENT, GIVING A HEALING BLESSING, SETTING SOMEONE APART FOR A CALLING, DEDICATING A BUILDING, THE TEMPLE, MISSIONARIES, A BISHOP, and THE PROPHET. Have the children choose a wordstrip and then draw what it says while the rest of the children guess what blessing from the priesthood is being drawn. Discuss how the priesthood blesses us in that instance or through that person. Sing an appropriate song or hymn after you discuss each wordstrip. ●

<p>1</p> <p>We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.</p>	
						
		<p>10</p> <p>TRIBES</p>				

Pebble of Forgiveness

BY JANE McBRIDE CHOATE

Based on a true story

Levi didn't have his mind on Primary that Sunday. He was still angry with his older brother, Jason. Jason had just gotten his driver's license. Last week, he had run over Levi's bike, even though Levi had carefully parked it at the side of the garage. Levi had saved his own money to buy the bike. It had taken a long time.

"I'm really sorry. I'll fix it up just like new," Jason promised.

Levi looked at the crumpled fender. "It won't be the same."

Jason apologized again, but Levi refused to listen. "If you weren't such a crummy driver, you wouldn't have wrecked my bike."

"I told you I'd fix the bike." Jason didn't sound so sorry now.

Levi stomped off, locking himself in his room for the rest of the afternoon and coming out only when Mom insisted he join the family for dinner.

That was last Wednesday. Levi had held onto his grudge for four days. It bothered him, being angry at Jason. Still, he didn't feel like forgiving his brother.

After opening exercises and singing time, Sister McClure, the second counselor in the Primary presidency, presented Sharing Time to the older children. Starting with Levi's class, she passed around a small paper cup. "Take one and pass it on," she said.

Levi reached inside the cup and found it filled with pebbles.

"Put a pebble into your shoe," she said. "Now try walking in place."

Levi lifted up his foot and brought it down again. The little stone felt funny against his foot. He tried to move it to a more comfortable spot, but it kept rubbing against his foot.

"Now reverently walk around the room," Sister McClure instructed.

Some of the children started giggling but stopped when Sister McClure reminded them to be reverent. A couple of the younger children started to limp and bent down to remove their stones.

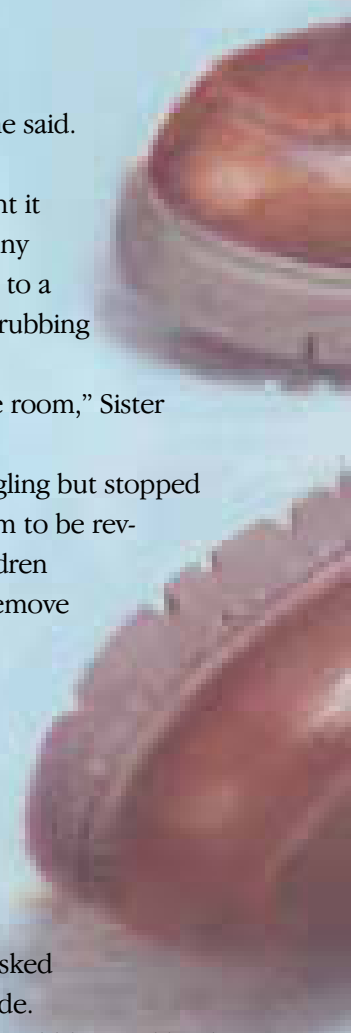
Levi kept the pebble in his shoe. It began to feel a lot bigger as he walked.

After a few minutes, Sister McClure told the children to take their seats and remove the pebbles from their shoes. Once more, she passed around the paper cup and asked the children to put the pebbles inside.

Then she explained, "Those little pebbles are like the feelings we have when we don't forgive someone who has offended us. They can start out small but then feel bigger and bigger."

"What if the person who did something to hurt us isn't really sorry?" Levi wanted to know.

"Sometimes we need to forgive, even when the





other person doesn't apologize or repent," Sister McClure responded.

Sister McClure told a story about a time when the Prophet Joseph Smith forgave one of his friends who had betrayed him. Levi felt a lump in his throat as he listened to how the Prophet had forgiven William W. Phelps, even though Brother Phelps had conspired with the mobs who persecuted the Church and its leaders.

Levi thought about Sister McClure's lesson during the rest of Primary. Following dinner that evening, when his parents asked family members what they had learned in church, Levi told them about the pebbles.

"How did your foot feel by the time you took the pebble out?" his dad asked.

"My foot was a little sore," Levi admitted. "Sister McClure compared walking around with a pebble in your shoe to carrying a grudge and refusing to forgive someone who offended you."

"It sounds like one of Mom's object lessons," his little sister, Annie, said.

Everyone laughed. The whole family knew that Mom liked to use objects in the lessons she gave for family home evening.

Before he went to bed, Levi knocked on Jason's door. "I'm sorry I've been such a jerk," he said when Jason opened the door. "I know you didn't mean to run over my bike."

"Hey, I'm the one who's sorry." Jason pulled Levi into a bear hug and lifted him off the floor. "What do you say we work on the bike together tomorrow after school? I'll ask Dad if we can use his tools."

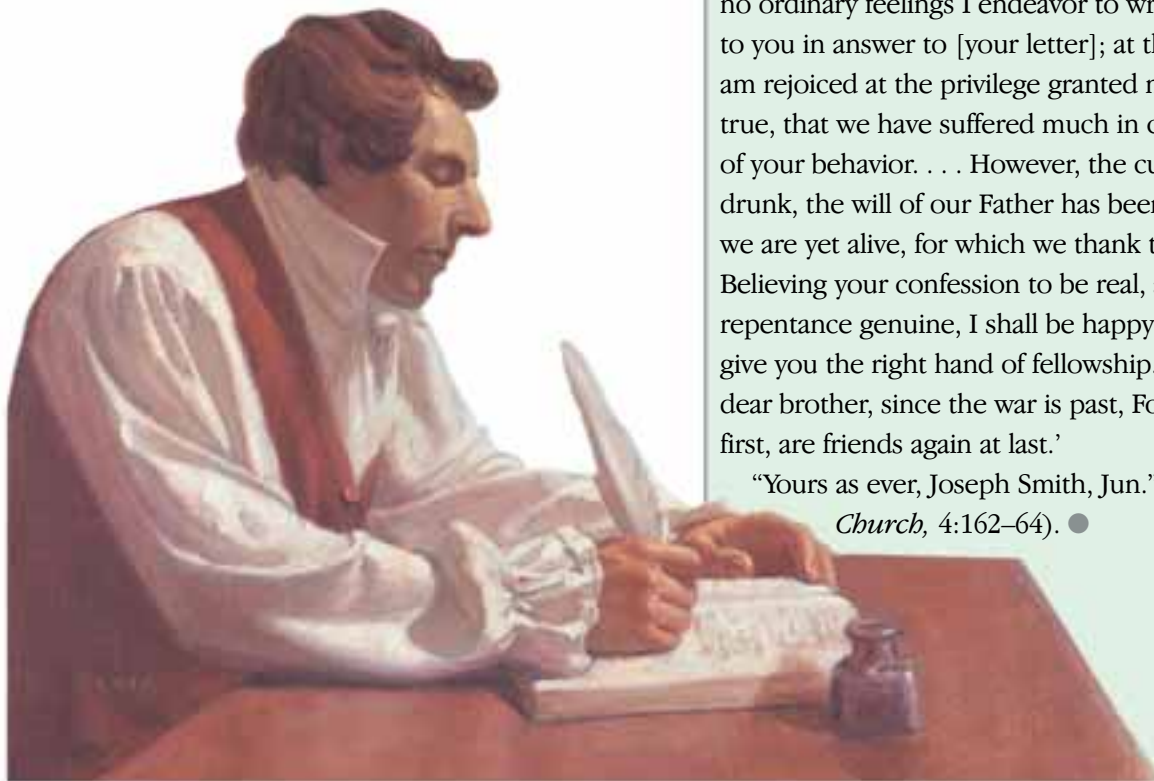
"Great!" Levi said, and as he went to his room, he thought, "I really *do* feel great!" ●

"FRIENDS AGAIN AT LAST"

After William W. Phelps betrayed the Prophet Joseph Smith, Brother Phelps asked for Joseph's forgiveness. The Prophet wrote him this letter:

"Dear Brother Phelps:—I must say that it is with no ordinary feelings I endeavor to write a few lines to you in answer to [your letter]; at the same time I am rejoiced at the privilege granted me. . . . It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior. . . . However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. . . . Believing your confession to be real, and your repentance genuine, I shall be happy once again to give you the right hand of fellowship. . . . 'Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, For friends at first, are friends again at last.'

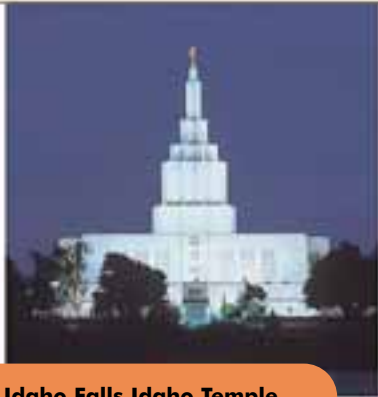
"Yours as ever, Joseph Smith, Jun." (*History of the Church*, 4:162–64). ●





Temple Cards

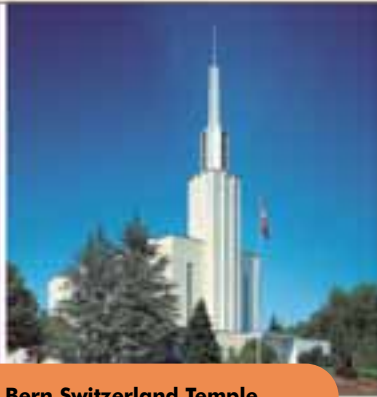
In 2003 each issue of *The Friend* will contain Temple Cards. Remove the Temple Cards from the magazine, glue them to heavy paper, and cut them out. Collect the cards to remind you of the importance of temples.



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE TREGGLE

Idaho Falls Idaho Temple

Dedicated on 23 September 1945 by President George Albert Smith



Bern Switzerland Temple

Dedicated on 11 September 1955 by President David O. McKay



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE TREGGLE

Los Angeles California Temple

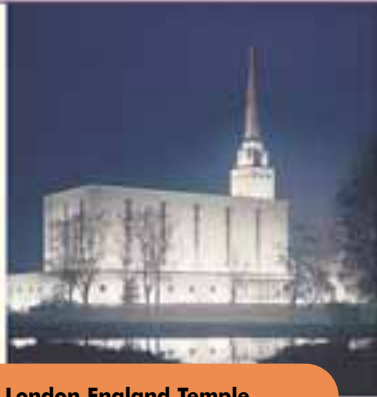
Dedicated on 11 March 1956 by President David O. McKay



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL MCCONKIE

Hamilton New Zealand Temple

Dedicated on 20 April 1958 by President David O. McKay



London England Temple

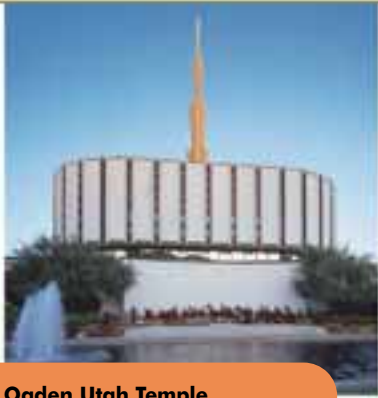
Dedicated on 7 September 1958 by President David O. McKay



PHOTOGRAPH BY LONGINI LONCZYNA

Oakland California Temple

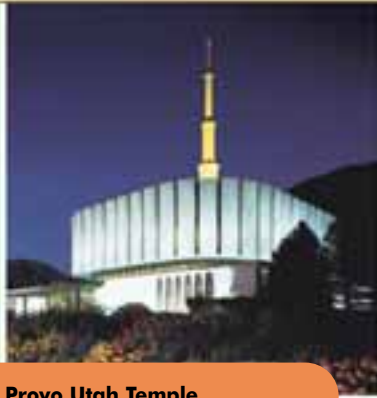
Dedicated on 17 November 1964 by President David O. McKay



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN TELFORD

Ogden Utah Temple

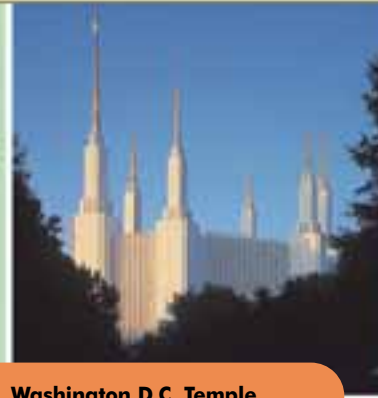
Dedicated on 18 January 1972 by President Joseph Fielding Smith



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE TREGGLE

Provo Utah Temple

Dedicated on 9 February 1972 by President Joseph Fielding Smith (prayer read by President Harold B. Lee)



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

Washington D.C. Temple

Dedicated on 19 November 1974 by President Spencer W. Kimball

Helping Mom

BY VINNY KEN MURAMATSU DE OLIVEIRA

When I was five, my mother had a problem with her back and she could not stand up for very long. One afternoon after lunch she and my two-year-old sister, Dafne, fell asleep.

I was playing a video game—my favorite thing to do. When I was playing the best part of the game, I thought about my mom. She always has to keep the house clean. Now her back was hurting her a lot. I thought I should help her and surprise her when she woke up.

I stopped playing my game. I went into the kitchen, stood on a chair, and

started to wash the dishes. There were lots of dishes, but I thought Mom could sleep some more if I did this for her.

I was still washing dishes when I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was Mom, asking what I was doing. I told her I was helping her back get better, and she started to cry. Then she said she was very happy because I wanted to help her. She hugged me and said that Jesus was happy about what I was doing.

I learned in Primary that we should be like Jesus. I never understood very well what I should do to be like Him. But because I helped Mom, I learned that the Holy Ghost helped me get the idea to help my mother when she needed it. The Holy Ghost helped me be like Jesus. ●

Vinny Ken Muramatsu de Oliveira, age 9, is a member of the Kariya Ward, Okazaki Japan Stake.



THE FIRST SACRAMENT



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

Every year the Jews had a feast called the Feast of the Passover. It helped them remember how God had saved the Israelites in Egypt long before, in the time of Moses.

Exodus 12:27; Luke 22:7



Jesus and the Twelve Apostles needed a place to eat the Passover feast. The Savior sent Peter and John to get a room ready for it.

Luke 22:8



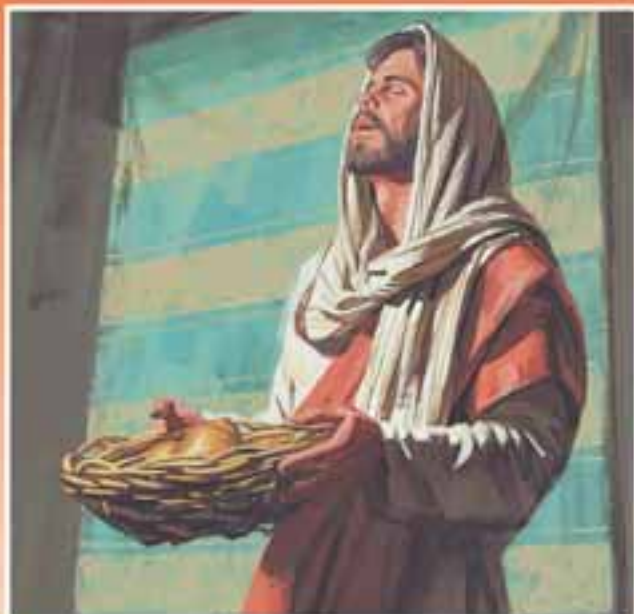
They found the room and got the feast ready.

Luke 22:9-13



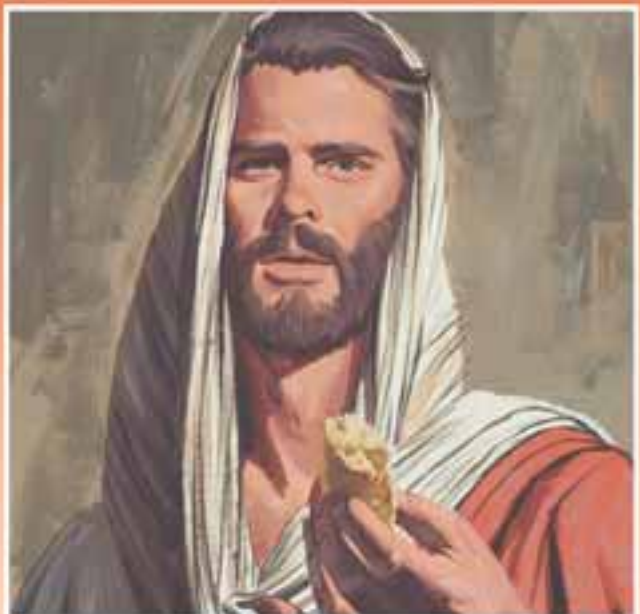
Jesus and all the Apostles went there and ate the Passover feast.

Luke 22:14



At the meal, Jesus gave His Apostles the sacrament for the first time. He took bread in His hands, blessed it, then broke it into pieces. He told the Apostles to eat the bread.

Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19



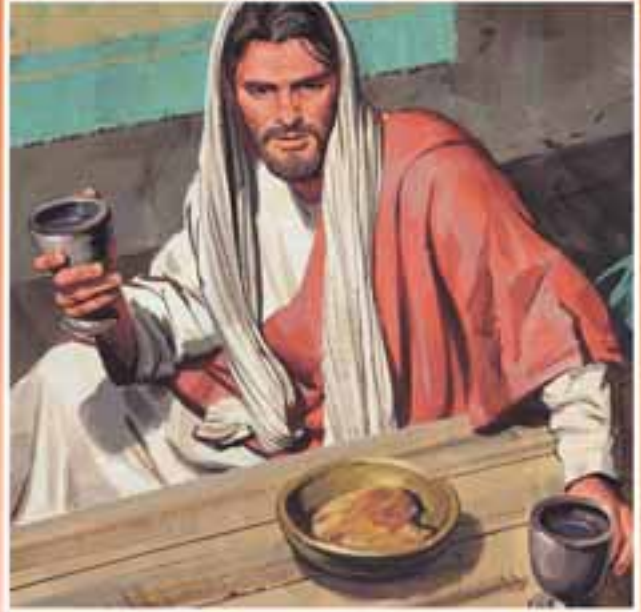
Jesus told them to think of His body when they ate the bread, to remember that He would die for them.

Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19



Jesus poured some wine into a cup. He blessed the wine. He told the Apostles to drink it.

Matthew 26:27



He told them to think of His blood when they drink the wine, to remember that He would bleed and suffer for people's sins.

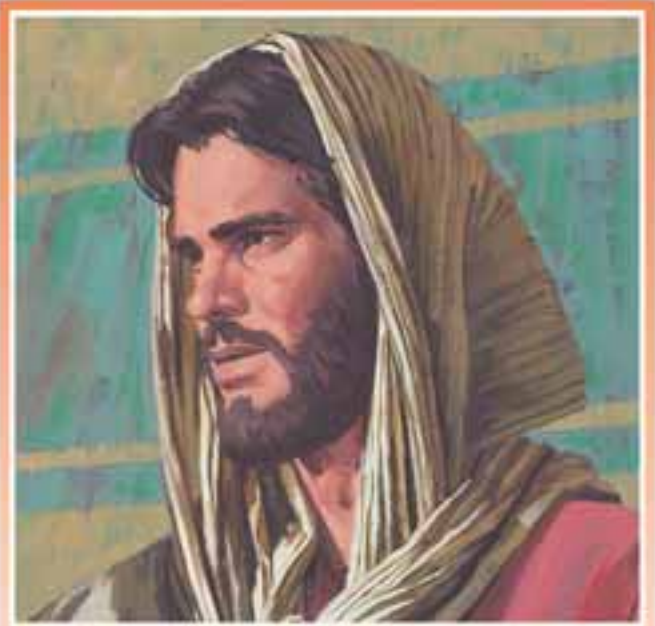
Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20



Jesus also told the Apostles that wicked people would kill Him. Eleven of the Apostles were very sad. They loved the Savior and did not want Him to die. Jesus knew that one of the Apostles, Judas Iscariot, would help the wicked people.

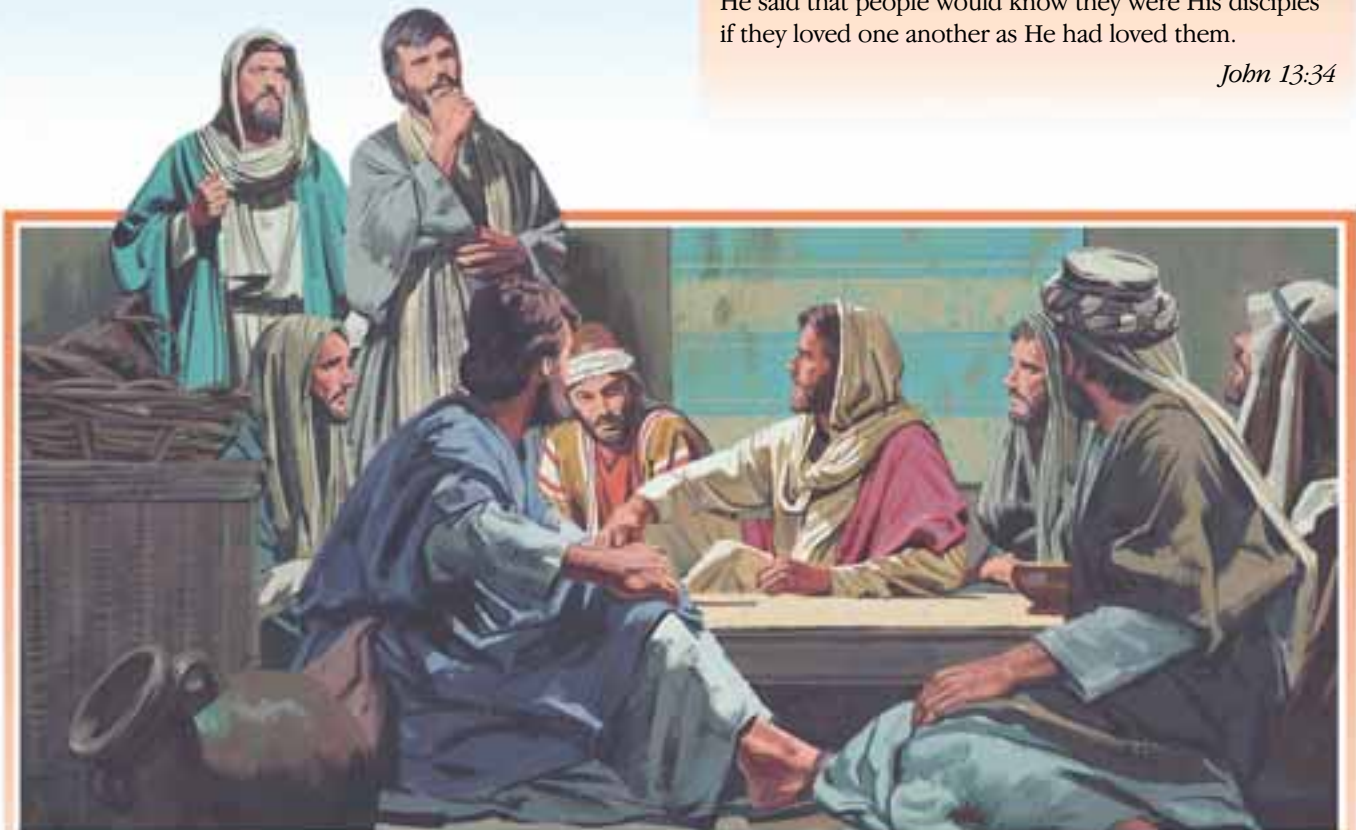
Matthew 26:2, 14-16, 21-25

OTHER TEACHINGS AT THE LAST SUPPER



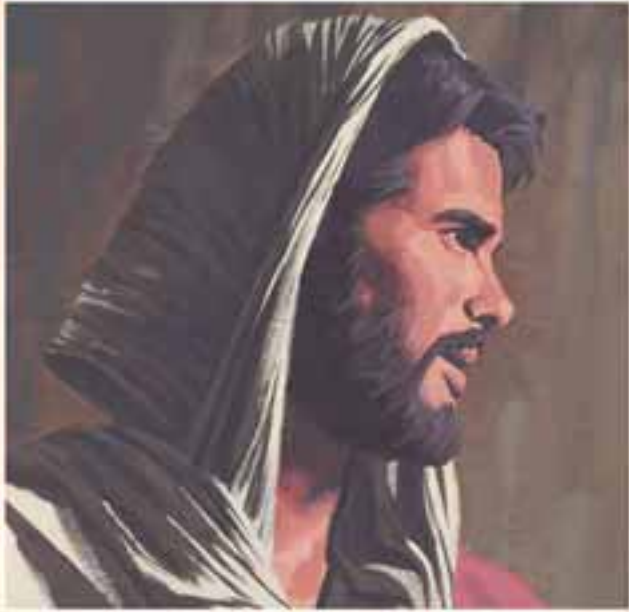
After they finished eating, Jesus talked with His Apostles. He said that people would know they were His disciples if they loved one another as He had loved them.

John 13:34



He said if they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. He promised them the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all they needed to know. He said the Holy Ghost would help them remember the things He had taught them.

John 14:15-18, 26



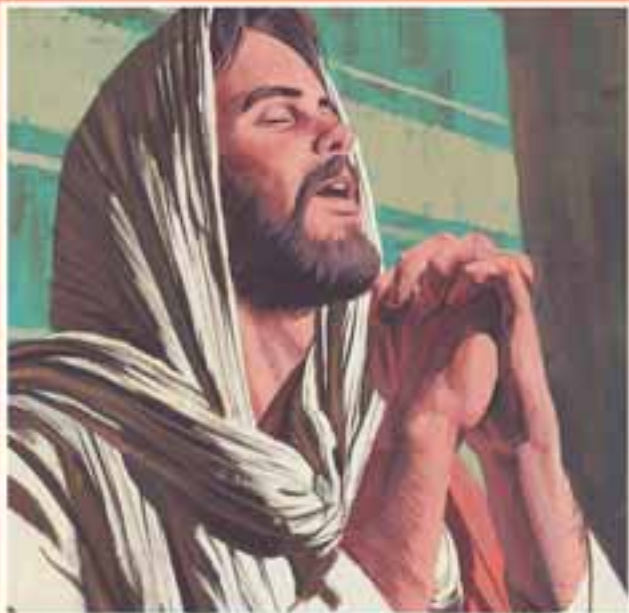
Jesus said that He was the true vine. His disciples were like branches growing from the vine. If branches do not produce good fruit, they will be cut off. If a branch breaks off from the true vine, it cannot produce any fruit. But if branches stay firmly attached, they will be nourished.

John 15:1-2



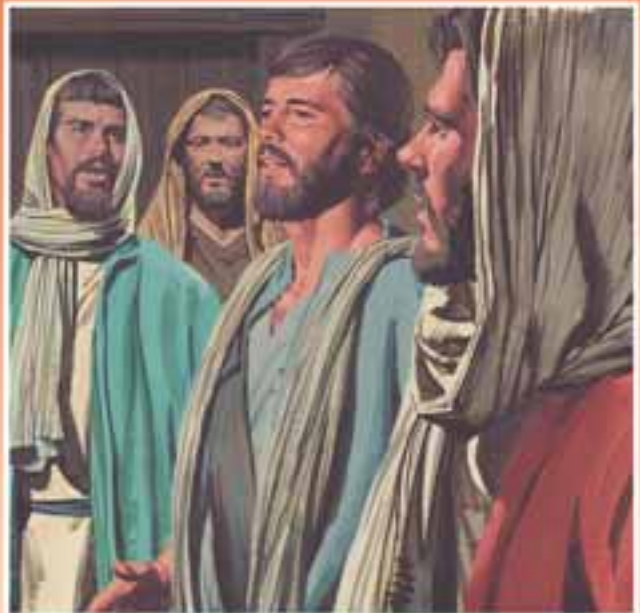
Jesus promised His Apostles that if they lived the gospel, they would be like branches of the good vine. He would make them strong. Their fruit, or their works, would be good. But if they did not follow Him, they would produce nothing.

John 15:3-8



Finally, Jesus Christ prayed that His Apostles would be one in doing the work of Heavenly Father. He said that He was one with the Father because He did what His Father sent Him to do. He prayed that His disciples would teach people to believe in Him.

John 17:1-4, 6, 20-23



Then Jesus and the Apostles sang a hymn and left the room.

Matthew 26:30

I'll Follow Him in Faith

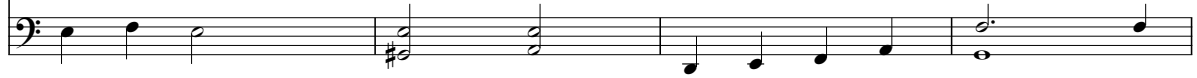
Boldly ♩ = 92-104



1. The Lord has blessed me with gos - pel truth. I have learned His ways in my ear - ly youth. I will
(2. The) Lord has blessed me to feel His love. I have felt His prompt - ings and learned to trust. So in



share my light, for I know it's right To tes - ti - fy of Him. — The
all I do, I'll be faith - ful to The things I know are true. — The



Lord has blessed me with sim - ple faith. If I pray for help, He will give me strength. I will
Lord has blessed me in man - y ways. With a thank - ful heart I will sing His praise. I will



do His work. I will glad - ly serve. I'll fol - low Him in faith. 1. The
raise my voice and pro - claim my choice To fol - low Him in faith. 2. The He has



shown the way, and through all my days, I'll fol - low Him in faith.

Words and music: Janice Kapp Perry, born 1938
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ILLUSTRATION BY DILLEN MARSH



Be Not Afraid, by Greg Olsen

FROM THE VISIONS OF FAITH COLLECTION BY MILL POND PRESS, INC., VENICE, FLORIDA

“Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed:
for the Lord thy God is with thee” (Joshua 1:9).



May there be found in our thoughts and actions the manifestation of an inward, spiritual peace and strength. May we have an absolute faith that all things are possible to God and hold in our remembrance that through our obedience all things may be made known to us by His Holy Spirit." See President James E. Faust, "Strengthening the Inner Self," p. 2.

