

WHY I BELIEVE IN ZION AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

By Apostle Clarence L. Wheaton.

There are those who may wonder as to the testimony which I have received touching this subject which has inspired me through the years to remain true to my convictions in the face of adverse criticism and the persuasion of friends to the contrary. Perhaps the penning of this testimony may be an inspiration to others.

I wish in this introduction to briefly state, that in the beginning of my association with the Church of Christ on the temple lot, I was neither born nor reared in the "fold", so to speak. Up to the time that I was baptized into the Church of Christ, at thirteen years of age (about 1906) I had attended, with my parents, the Methodist church. A most remarkable experience, through the laying on of hands, in which I was miraculously healed of what our family physician had pronounced an "incurable disease", was the prime cause of the conversion of my parents and part of their family, including myself, to the Church of Christ.

From the first, I had a great zeal and strong determination to serve the Lord and to know his will. The result was, that by the leading of his Spirit, I received the revelation of His will to my soul, which was not given me by flesh and blood, but of God. As a result, by the time I was nearly sixteen years old, I was called and ordained to the office of teacher in the Aaronic priesthood. For a number of years I occupied in this capacity. Many spiritual experiences were received and enjoyed by me, which strengthened and encouraged me to greater effort in the ministry.

In time I married, and became the happy father of three fine boys by the spring of 1919. During this time I had been called and ordained an elder, and was serving as the pastor of the "little white church on the hill", the symbol of all that is true and fundamental in the Restoration to me.

During all this time I never had reason to doubt the theory of a gathering, the building of the temple as the place of Christ's second coming and giving of the endowment, nor the building of Zion. Yet, I must confess, that though I was convinced of these truths from a scriptural standpoint, I had not received a personal testimony of them. I took them, so to speak, as a matter of fact.

This was my position up to and including the winter of 1920-1921. In January of 1921 our first baby girl, Ellen Angela, was born. Six weeks later, in February, she died, leaving us desolate and heart-broken, because of unfulfilled hopes in having our only daughter prematurely taken from us. To say we were greatly bereaved would be putting it mildly. To us our world had tumbled at our feet. For the time being our joy, our hopes were past, the future appeared dark and hopeless.

While in the state of mind that accompanies such experiences, my mental faculties were engaged in considerable introspection. In my grief, I imagined that the heavenly Father had taken this means of awakening me to a realization that I had possibly devoted considerable time, means and zeal to a cause, (the Church of Christ) which was not pleasing in his sight. The infant's sickness was brief, but during this period I gave much thought to the above mentioned review of my life and much earnest and fervent prayer. The evening she died, her little casket was arranged and placed on a stand in the same room in which we slept,—a combination sitting room and bedroom.

After evening prayer, we retired for the night,

about nine o'clock. Having been completely exhausted from the vigil with the child during its sickness, we were soon wrapped in sound sleep. At approximately three o'clock the next morning, I was suddenly awakened, as though some one had called me. I became wide awake instantly, and sat up in bed. The objects of the room, even the little casket, were clearly visible, as the room was bathed in moonlight. I was fully conscious of all my surroundings, but was soon wrapped in vision, and had the following most thrilling and inspiring experience:

My wife and I seemingly had reached middle age, and the responsibilities of family life, with the rearing of children, etc., were over. We were engaged together in missionary work, and apparently had been appointed to a foreign field.

In the opening scene of this vision we were walking along a rough cobble-stone road in an easterly direction. The sides of the road were lined with strange trees, which, since traveling through California, we have learned were olive trees. We were in the vision under the impression that we were nearing the city of Jerusalem.

Suddenly, in a north-easterly direction, we noticed a peculiar cloud forming. It was rather black and moving with a rotating motion that caused us to stop with awe and wonderment as we gazed upon it. From all parts of the heavens, small fleecy bits of clouds were moving towards it as small bits of steel are attracted to a magnet. Around about us it became dark and threatening. Flashes of lightening pierced into it, first from one side and then the other. Then thunder that would ensue caused the earth to tremble by its reverberations.

From behind the cloud a brilliant light began to send forth its rays, similar to sun rays, but it was not the sun, for this phenomenon was taking place in the wrong quarter of the heavens. These rays of light were white and brilliant, more so than the sunlight, and they dispelled all darkness upon the earth.

Suddenly, a great rending flash of lightening, much more powerful than the others, pierced into the very center of this great mass of cloud. The heavens and the earth were shaken, and the ground under our feet rocked to and fro. Then all became breathlessly silent, and a most glorious and thrilling scene unfolded before our eyes. This great cloud, seemingly, had parted, or was pushed back both directions from the center, as though it was the silent moving curtains of a beautifully appointed stage. The settings were magnificent. There appeared a great white throne, surrounded with soft, billowy white clouds. The whiteness thereof exceeded the whiteness of anything I have ever seen in this life. The light was more brilliant than the sun, and eclipsed it in glory.

Upon the throne was seated a beautiful woman. Never in my life have I seen a more perfectly formed creature. Every feature was symmetrical; complexion fair, and skin flawlessly white. Hair, light brown, lustrous, floating over her shoulders. Eyes were blue, with a straight-forward look of virtue, grace and courage. She was dressed in purest white linen which reached to her bare feet. Truly she was a queen in her glory.

In her lap lay a new born child of only a few hours, wrapped in a soft downy blanket, a most entrancing picture of motherhood. Upon the woman's face was a mingled expression of joy and pain, as is only seen upon the face of a mother who has just passed through her travail and given birth.

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people is always a spiritual refreshing as well as a time of physical repose.

We next lodged in the home of my youngest brother Elder W. F. Yates, in San Bernardino. While here I attended services on Sunday in the Reorganized church. Their people are friendly in demeanor, but numbers of their cautious leaders seem to still prefer the closed pulpit policy which was first inaugurated in the year 1925. Brother Frank VanFleet preached on the day I attended their services. He is not a man who favors the closed pulpit policy, for he has worked too long in former days in the church contemporary with the late Joseph Smith when the church was free from that heresy so lately glorified by reason of the necessity which error always faces when it finds its cause undefensable.

We began a series of gospel meetings in Wilmar, some twelve miles East of Los Angeles. At this writing we have a number of splendid outside people interested, and we are continuing the work for a time. Elder Levi Hemenway is pastor of the Church of Christ here. He is a most efficient and capable minister, and a man filled with the holy Spirit and with love. His undaunted labors here against the influence of sin and wickedness in the world all about us, and against disappointments that are within, make him a man beloved by all.

We have spent some time in the home of our worthy Brother and Sister Daiken, and Sister Harper, at Ontario, California, thirty miles from Wilmar; also at the home of our own folks, Vida's daughter and family Evan and Earlita Inslee, in Los Angeles. Yesterday we were at the home of Brother and Sister I. J. Sullivan in Los Angeles; and we are for the gospel's sake welcomed also in the homes of people not affiliated with the church. Of these we mention Mr. Ernest Hagener, a man who appreciates the good wherever he finds it, and Mrs. Hague, a splendid lady of the same mind. Also Mr. and Mrs. Rogers and family who are members of the Utah church, and Mr. and Mrs. Clark, of the Christian church, and who are now interested in the Book of Mormon.

On the 8th day of August, Brother and Sister Charles Salter, of San Pedro, gave a birthday party in honor of Sister Salter's seventieth birth day. A group of us from Ontario, California and from Wilmar, drove over to the Salter's home on the ocean front at San Pedro, for the party. Brother Daiken's place of employment, the "Hot Point" Flat Iron factory required his services that day, so we were deprived of their company at the ocean party. Sister Harper and her daughter, Sister Mercer, attended. Also Mrs. Hague, Mr. Hagener, Brother Hemenway and ourselves. And what delightful fellowship we all had together that day. After a visit to the beach and a swim in the ocean, Brother and Sister Salter served the dinner in the elegant home of their son where they reside at present. It was a fish dinner with all the trimmings—fresh fish from the ocean, too. How excellently it was all prepared and served, and above all, how sweet the spirit of gospel fellowship while we shared together in the association of brotherhood.

At our Sacramental service in the meeting on Sunday the gifts of the Spirit through the gospel were poured out upon the assembly. The hearts of members and non-members alike, were touched and blessed by the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Through Elder Hemenway the gift of tongues and interpretation was given. Other manifestation by the Spirit was given, and all rejoiced together in the Lord. We pray that the same sweet and blessed Spirit which was sent from heaven upon us that day, may also be given to the people of the Lord throughout the entire church, both for the edification of the congregations, as well as to stimulate the souls of those who are scattered and isolated throughout all lands. For it is by the office work of the Holy Spirit that souls may be fortified to meet the adversary of life, and to conquer our temptations. Let us with all diligence keep the vessel of our individual lives so cleansed from sin and carnality that God may give to us the indwelling of His Holy Spirit to be our guiding monitor in all our ways.

Your brother in the fellowship of faith,
 JAMES E. YATES,
 946 North Ave. 49, Los Angeles, California,
 care of E. E. Inslee.

Why I Believe In Zion And The Building Of The Temple

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As we stood and gazed in astonishment at this most extraordinary scene, a voice, as from the heavens, spoke in a deep, vibrant tone and said, "Behold she hath travailed, and brought forth Zion." We were given to understand that the woman was the Church of Christ established April 6, 1830; that the child was the Zion of God, which the church, through much spiritual travail and sorrow, must establish as a place of gathering for her children.

All at once the scene was changed. The woman and child, as well as the great white throne, faded away, and then it seemed that Sister Wheaton and I had been suddenly transported through space to the city of Independence, Missouri. The place where we were standing was on a spot south of the Temple Lot, close to where the Missouri Pacific depot is now located. All buildings and other obstructions had in some way been entirely removed for a considerable space between us and the temple lot. There was not a fence nor a street to be seen anywhere. Seemingly from the temple lot to our feet the ground was gently sloping in a beautifully terraced lawn.

At the top of the elevation, at the spot where the excavation for the temple is now located, I could discern the outlines of a large magnificent structure against the twilight sky. While our attention was thus being drawn toward this structure the shades of night were gradually falling.

Again, the scene was changed. This time, I was alone. I seemed to be suspended in the air approximately 100 yards away in a south-westerly direction from the structure. Here I had a most excellent view of this beautiful structure and its immediate surroundings. The same voice which I had heard before, spoke to me again and said, "Behold the temple of the Lord!"

I saw before me the temple as it will appear when finished, according to the plans which we are now working on. By this time it was dusk, yet, in spite of that fact, the temple glowed as though reflecting a soft mellow light. My very soul was filled with ecstasy, and my whole being was thrilled with the transport of joy which I experienced.

As I gazed in wonderment at this glorious

structure, the whole west end, south side and just a small corner of the east portico and approaches were visible, as I was looking in a north-easterly direction. From a point in the heavens, I saw as it were a beam of clear white light thrust down to the earth from the east toward the temple, at first no larger than a needle, and then as it pierced down and down through the evening sky, it spread out till it formed a large circle whose circumference included the temple and the grounds. The temple and immediate surroundings were brought out in bold relief. The columns, windows, etc., of the temple, as well as the beautifully landscaped lawn, with its flowers, walks and grass, were vividly portrayed to my vision. As I looked in wonder and amazement upon the scene before me, my attention was attracted to a tiny object far up in the path of the beam of light which I described before, which was gradually descending toward the front of the building. It seemed as though a long period of time elapsed before this object took form, and then it appeared to be a personage robed in purest white garments. When this personage had descended to within 200 feet above the temple, he stopped, and I beheld that it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As I humbly bowed my head in reverence, feeling unworthy to look upon His beaming countenance, I again heard that deep, vibrant voice, close to my side, speak to me and say, "Lift up your voice and sing,—

"Oh, Zion, Lift up your gates and sing,
Hosanna to the Highest!
Hosanna to your King!"

As commanded, I began to sing the above words and others, which I do not fully recall now. While singing, the circle of light enlarged till it covered a large portion of the city. At this juncture the Christ descended to the ground and his feet rested upon the steps of the front portico, which extended a considerable distance east from the main structure of the building, and then solemnly and majestically he ascended the steps until he was lost from my view. As he did so, my attention was drawn to moving objects just in the border of half-light outside the circle of white light. All the while I was singing with the spirit and a purity of tone such as I have never enjoyed in this life. I could see these objects gradually coming closer to the circle of light. Then crossing the line into the full dazzling light, I witnessed that they were a great concourse of men, women and children, of every nation, kindred, tongue and people of the earth, as was apparent by their different styles of dress and facial features. They too, were singing in perfect accord with myself, first faintly, as if far away, and then gradually stronger, as if thousands were joined in a vast peon of praise to God and His Christ. We all sang in one language, the same words. Foremost among them, I saw our Lamanite brethren, some with feathers and blankets; others dressed in well fitting clothes. Following them, people of other nationalities.

Words can not describe the ecstasy of that moment. But suffice it to say, that after this glorious and thrilling experience there has never been the least question in my mind as to the divinity of these three great fundamentals of the Restoration; namely, the building of the temple, the gathering and the endowment.

As this great concourse of people emerged into the circle of light, they formed in orderly lines and walked humbly, yet joyously and solemnly to the front, or east end of the temple, and passed from my view up the steps into the main auditorium, singing.

Then the vision gradually began to fade away. Soon I was conscious of the surroundings of my room again. I was still sitting up in bed. Evidently an hour or more had passed since I first awoke.

As the last strains of this heavenly music died away on the night, my companion reached over and gently touched my arm and said, "Clarence, are you awake?"

I answered, "Yes. Why?"

She then asked, "Do you know what you were doing?"

I again answered, "Yes, dear, I was singing."

She then said, "Yes, I could hear every word clearly. I never in all my life heard anything like it. You just can't sing that way when you are awake. No one could. There was such unconstraint, exulting freedom about it."

By this time all thoughts or desire for sleep were gone. The glorious spirit and impression of joy was indelibly stamped upon my mind and heart for ever. Today, after many years have elapsed, the memory of that experience is just as fresh and fragrant to me as it was that night. It will always remain as one of those outstanding experiences of a life time, which influences and directs man's ambitions. To me this was a testimony from God to my soul of a great and important feature of his glorious work in the last days.

This, my friends is my testimony, received by the revelation of God to my soul, in the presence of a witness, my wife, and I testify to all men that as God is my maker (and I have full consciousness of the fact that I will stand before Him at the judgment and give an accounting of these things), I know that this testimony is true, and that to the best of my knowledge and understanding the plans of the temple, as they are now arranged, agree with what I saw then.

May God, the Eternal Father, give each of you a testimony of the truth of these words and plant in your hearts a zeal and determination to carry on to its final completion this great undertaking, in my fervent and earnest prayer. Amen.

Dedicated to the Church of Christ, this sixth day of July, 1934, being my forty-first birthday.

OUR RADIATIONS.

In an address given over the radio it was said that the circle, or halo, always seen around the head of Jesus, is not imaginary, but is a scientifically proven fact. Furthermore, it is said that we all, or each of us, has a circle about our head, though not seen with the naked eye. Science declares that in persons who live pure lives this circle is light in color, while in persons who lead evil lives the circle is dark. This is felt, rather than seen by the human eye. We know that we have met people who seemed to radiate love and kindness; others are repulsive to us, and even children shrink from them; they radiate evil. We can change our radiations from evil to good by making our lives pure and living the Christ life, and we thereby make the world better even though unable to work with the hands, by simply sending out, or broadcasting these pure radiations to all with whom we associate. When we grow old and unable to carry on the Lord's work in the usual way, what a beautiful thought to comfort us that we can still be workers in the vineyard and just as important as in our more active days! Yes, perhaps more important, radiating God's love. Let us make our lives pure and full of love that our halo or crown may be as pure and white as the driven snow. H. E. Highland