Letter VIII

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Abstract: Description of the topography of the hill Cumorah; description of the “cement” box in which the plates were deposited; description of Joseph Smith’s first attempt to retrieve the plates; extensive quotations of Moroni’s teachings and instructions to Joseph Smith; history of Joseph Smith from 1823–1827; concluding remarks
low only 200 millions to be Christians! Thus, instead of "much fruit," (and there is probably as much now as there has been since the flood,) the earth contains more than 500 millions of Heathens! And I feel constrained to say, that those who profess to be Christians act more heathenish among themselves, and more savage to others, of late, than the rude Arabs,—the untaught Hottentots, or the wild Indians. Go through all the sects in Christendom, which have been striving for power, during the last fifty years, like so many ferocious beasts, and where will you find a man of God? Where will you find a servant of the Lord, who can prevail by prayer and faith, and unstop the bottles of heaven in a drought? Where will you find a mighty man that can chase a thousand—or two put ten thousand to flight? Where will you find a man that can say to a Dorcas, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise,"—and have her spirit return—and she again live? Not among the catholics; not among the episcopalians; not among the presbyterians; not among the quakers; not among the Methodists; not among the Baptists; not among the Christians; not among the Campbellites; not among the universalists; no; not among any sect, for they have only a form of godliness, and deny the power thereof. In fact, the faith of the church of Christ of latter day saints, has not been sufficient, amid such a world of unbelief, to perform many great miracles. The sick have been healed; and speaking and interpreting other tongues are common: but thanks be to God, if the church continues to go from grace to grace, and from faith to faith, it will soon lack no good gift.

I can only turn, then, to the infant church of Christ of latter day saints, and pray the Lord to keep it in the right way, and all things for the edification, and for the salvation of men, and for the glorification of God, will be in the possession of the saints.—The Lord has not changed, his gospel is the same from the beginning to the end; neither is he slack; his promises and gifts to men never fail, if they continue faithful in all his commandments; The Lord is the same in time and in eternity, yesterday, to-day, and forever. If we, as saints, are pure before him, what Enoch saw we can see;

what Moses did we can do; what Peter had we can have; what the saints endured we can endure; and what the righteous receive we shall receive.—Glorious prospect! What joy to come! O I want a world of words—a universe of praise, and an eternity of gratitude, to thank the Lord for what he has done; and will do for those that love and serve him faithfully to the end. Not that the saints expect to labor for the corruptible treasures of the world, or honors such as the Gentiles seek: As the church of Christ we plough not the ocean for wealth; we visit not foreign climes for gold; we risk not our lives among all manner of men for fame:—no; the servants of Jesus Christ go whither ever he commands them to carry glad tidings—to proclaim salvation to all that will accept of it, according to the conditions of the gospel—that the kingdom of heaven may come:—yea, the joyful day be ushered in, when Israel shall be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, to meet their Redeemer, and have their ungodliness turned away.

Glory to God in the highest: let peace reign among his children, and let good will and mercy become a sweet invitation to the poor Indians, that they may come into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and receive their penny, with songs of everlasting joy.

As ever,

W. W. PHELPS.

To Oliver Cowdery.

LETTER VIII.

Dear Brother,—In my last I said I should give, partially, a "description of the place where, and the manner in which these records were deposited;" the first promise I have fulfilled, and must proceed to the latter:

The hill of which I have been speaking, at the time mentioned, presented a varied appearance: the north end rose suddenly from the plain, forming a promontory without timber; but covered with grass. As you passed to the south you soon came to scattering timber, the surface having been cleared by art or by wind; and a short distance further left, you are surrounded with the common forest of the country. It is necessary to observe, that even the part cleared was only occupied for pas-
urage, its steep ascent and narrow summit not admitting the plow of the husbandman, with any degree of ease or profit. It was at the second mentioned place where the record was found to be deposited, on the west side of the hill, not far from the top down its sides; and when myself visited the place in the year 1830, there were several trees standing: enough to cause a shade in summer, but not so much as to prevent the surface being covered with grass—which was also the case when the record was first found.

Whatever may be the feeling of men on the reflection of past acts which have been performed on certain portions or spots of this earth, I know not; neither does it add or diminish to nor from the reality of my subject. When Moses heard the voice of God, at the foot of Mount Horeb, out of the burning bush, he was commanded to take his shoes off his feet, for the ground on which he stood was holy. The same may be observed when Joshua beheld the "Captain of the Lord's host" by Jericho.—And I confess that my mind was filled with many reflections; and though I did not then lose my shoe, yet with gratitude to God did I offer up the sacrifice of my heart.

How far below the surface these records were placed by Moroni, I am unable to say; but from the fact that they had been some fourteen hundred years buried, and that too on the side of a hill so steep, one is ready to conclude that they were some feet below, as the earth would naturally wear more or less in that length of time. But they being placed toward the top of the hill, the ground would not remove as much as at two-thirds, perhaps. Another circumstance would prevent a wearing of the earth: in all probability, as soon as timber had time to grow, the hill was covered, after the Nephites were destroyed, and the roots of the same would hold the surface. However, on this point I shall leave every man to draw his own conclusion, and form his own speculation, as I only promised to give a description of the place at the time the records were found in 1823.—It is sufficient for my present purpose, to know, that such is the fact: that in 1823, yes, 1823, a man with whom I have had the most intimate and personal acquaintance, for almost seven years, actually discovered by the vision of God, the plates from which the book of Mormon, as much as it is disbelieved, was translated! Such is the case, though men rack their very brains to invent falsehoods, and then wait them upon every breeze, to the contrary notwithstanding.

I have now given sufficient on the subject of the hill Cumorah—it has a singular and imposing appearance for that country, and must excite the curious enquiry of every lover of the book of Mormon: though I hope never like Jerusalem, and the sepulchre of our Lord, the pilgrims. In my estimation, certain places are "dearer to me for what they now contain than for what they have contained. For the satisfaction of such as believe I have been thus particular, and to avoid the question being a thousand times asked, more than any other cause, shall proceed and be as particular as heretofore. The manner in which the plates were deposited:

First, a hole of sufficient depth, (how deep I know not,) was dug. At the bottom of this was laid a stone of suitable size, the upper surface being smooth. At each edge was placed a large quantity of cement, and into this cement, at the four edges of this stone, were placed, erect, four others, their bottom edges resting in the cement at the outer edges of the first stone. The four last named, when placed erect, formed a box, the corners, or where the edges of the four came in contact, were also cemented so firmly that the moisture from without was prevented from entering. It is to be observed, also, that the inner surface of the four erect, or side stones was smooth. This box was sufficiently large to admit a breast-plate, such as was used by the ancients to defend the chest, &c., from the arrows and weapons of their enemy. From the bottom of the box, or from the breast-plate, arose three small pillars composed of the same description of cement used on the edges; and upon these three pillars was placed the record of the children of Joseph, and of a people who left the tower far, far before the days of Joseph, or a sketch of each, which had it not been for this, and the never failing goodness of God, we might have perished in our sins, having been left to bow down before the altars of the Gentiles and to have paid homage to the priests of Baal! I must
not forget to say that this box, containing the record was covered with another stone, the bottom surface being flat and the upper, crowning. But those three pillars were not so lengthy as to cause the plates and the crowning stone to come in contact. I have now given you, according to my promise, the manner in which this record was deposited; though when it was first visited by our brother, in 1823, a part of the crowning stone was visible above the surface while the edges were concealed by the soil and grass, from which circumstance you will see, that however deep this box might have been placed by Moroni at first, the time had been sufficient to wear the earth so that it was easily discovered, when once directed, and yet not enough to make a perceivable difference to the passer-by. So wonderful are the works of the Almighty, and so far from our finding out are his ways, that one who trembles to take his holy name into his lips, is left to wonder at his exact providences, and the fulfillment of his purposes in the event of times and seasons. A few years sooner might have found even the top stone concealed, and discouraged our brother from attempting to make a further trial to obtain this rich treasure, for fear of discovery; and a few later might have left the small box uncovered, and exposed its valuable contents to the rude calculations and vain speculations of those who neither understand common language nor fear God. But such would have been contrary to the words of the ancients and the promises made to them: and this is why I am left to admire the works and see the wisdom in the designs of the Lord in all things manifested to the eyes of the world: they show that all human inventions are like the vapors, while his word endures forever and his promises to the last generation.

Having thus digressed from my main subject to give a few items for the special benefit of all, it will be necessary to return, and proceed as formerly. And if you suppose I have indulged too freely in reflections, I will only say, that it is my opinion, were one to have a view of the glory of God which is to cover Israel in the last days, and know that these, though they may be thought small things, were the beginning to effect the same, they would be at a loss where to close, should they give a moment’s vent to the imaginations of the heart.

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

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

On attempting to take possession of the record a shock was produced upon his system, by an invisible power,
which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this, he knew not—there was the pure unsullied record, as had been described—he had heard of the power of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without premeditating he exclaimed, "Why can I not obtain this book?" "Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord," answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked, and to his astonishment, there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days, were brought to his mind: he thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite; and when his holy messenger from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come, to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the record, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and bear them away.

At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condensation and mercy: the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While thus gazing and admiring, the angel said, "Look!" and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, "All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: It is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who kept the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promise, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record might be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them, must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands, the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall trem
ble with anger; but with signs and
with wonders, with gifts and with heal-
ings, with the manifestations of the
power of God, and with the Holy Ghost,
shall the hearts of the faithful be com-
forted. You have now beheld the pow-
er of God manifested and the power of
satan: you see that there is nothing
that is desirable in the works of dark-
ness; that they cannot bring happiness;
that those who are overcome therewith
are miserable, while on the other hand
the righteous are blessed with a place
in the kingdom of God where joy un-
speaked surrounds them. There they
rest beyond the power of the enemy
of truth, where no evil can disturb
them. The glory of God crowns them,
and they continually feast upon his
goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold,
notwithstanding you have seen this
great display of power, by which you
may ever be able to detect the evil one.
yet I give unto you another sign, and
when it comes to pass then know that
the Lord is God and that he will fulfill
his purposes, and that the knowledge
which this record contains will go to
every nation, and kindred, and tongue,
and people under the whole heaven.
This is the sign: When these things
begin to be known, that is, when it is
known that the Lord has shown you
these things, the workers of iniquity
will seek your overthrow: they will
circulate falsehoods to destroy your
reputation, and also will seek to take
your life; but remember this, if you
are faithful, and shall hereafter con-
tinue to keep the commandments of the
Lord, you shall be preserved to bring
these things forth; for in due time he
will again give you a commandment to
come and take them. When they are
interpreted the Lord will give the holy
priesthood to some, and they shall be-
gin to proclaim this gospel and baptize
by water, and after that they shall have
power to give the Holy Ghost by the
laying on of their hands. Then will
persecution rage more and more; for
the iniquities of men shall be revealed,
and those who are not built upon the
Rock will seek to overthrow this church;
but it will increase the more opposed,
and spread farther and farther, increas-
ing in knowledge till they shall be
sanctified and receive an inheritance
where the glory of God will rest upon
them; and when this takes place, and
all things are prepared, the ten tribes
of Israel will be revealed in the north
country, whither they have been for a
long season; and when this is fulfilled
will be brought to pass that saying of
the prophet—"And the Redeemer shall
come to Zion, and unto them that turn
from transgression in Jacob, saith the
Lord"—But, notwithstanding the work-
ers of iniquity shall seek your destruc-
tion the arm of the Lord will be ex-
tended, and you will be borne off conquer-
or, if you keep all his commandments.
Your name shall be known among the
nations, for the work which the Lord
will perform by your hands shall cause
the righteous to rejoice and the wicked
to rage; with the one it shall be had in
honor, and with the other in reproach;
yet, with these it shall be a terror be-
cause of the great and marvelous work
which shall follow the coming forth of
this fulness of the gospel. Now, go thy
way, remembering what the Lord has
done for thee, and be diligent in keep-
ing his commandments, and he will de-

er thee from temptations and all the
arts and devices of the wicked one.
Forget not to pray, that thy mind may
become strong, that when he shall
manifest unto thee, thou mayest have
power to escape the evil, and obtain
these precious things."

Though I am unable to paint before
the mind, a perfect description of the
scenery which passed before our broth-
er, I think I have said enough to give
you a field for reflection which may
not be unprofitable. You see the great
wisdom in God in leading him thus far,
that his mind might begin to be more
matured, and thereby be able to judge
correctly, the spirits. I do not say
that he would not have obtained the
record had he went according to the
direction of the angel—I say that he
would; but God knowing all things
from the beginning, began thus to in-
struct his servant. And in this it is
plainly to be seen that the adversary
of truth is not sufficient to overthrow
the work of God. You will remember
that I said, two invisible powers were
operating upon the mind of our brother
while going to Cumorah. In this, then,
I discover wisdom in the dealings of
the Lord: it was impossible for any
man to translate the book of Mormon
by the gift of God, and endure the afflic-
tious, and temptations, and devices
of satan, without being overthrown,
unless he had been previously benefi-
ted with a certain round of experience; and had our brother obtained the record the first time, not knowing how to detect the works of darkness, he might have been deprived of the blessing of sending forth the word of truth to this generation. Therefore, God knowing that satan would thus lead his mind astray, began at that early hour, that when the full time should arrive, he might have a servant prepared to fulfill his purpose. So, however afflicting to his feelings this repulse might have been, he had reason to rejoice before the Lord and be thankful for the favors and mercies shown; that whatever other instruction was necessary to the accomplishing this great work, he had learned, by experience, how to discern between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the devil.

From this time to September, 1827, few occurrences worthy of note, transpired. As a fact to be expected, nothing of importance could be recorded concerning a generation in darkness.—In the mean time our brother of whom I have been speaking, passed the time as others, in laboring for his support. But in consequence of certain false and slanderous reports which have been circulated, justice would require me to say something upon the private life of one whose character has been so shamefully traduced. By some he is said to have been a lazy, idle, vicious, profligate fellow. These I am prepared to contradict, and that too by the testimony of many persons with whom I have been intimately acquainted, and know to be individuals of the strictest veracity, and unquestionable integrity. All these strictly and virtually agree in saying, that he was an honest, upright, virtuous, and faithfully industrious young man. And those who say to the contrary can be influenced by no other motive than to destroy the reputation of one who never injured any man in either property or person.

While young, I have been informed he was afflicted with sickness; but I have been told by those for whom he has labored, that he was a young man of truth and industrious habits. And I will add further that it is my conviction, if he never had been called to the exalted station in which he now occupies, he might have passed down the stream of time with ease and in respectability, without the foul and hellish tongue of slander ever being employed against him. It is no more than to be expected, I admit, that men of corrupt hearts will try to traduce his character and put a spot upon his name: indeed, this is according to the word of the angel; but this does not prohibit me from speaking freely of his merits, and contradicting these falsehoods—I feel myself bound so to do, and I know that my testimony, on this matter, will be received and believed while those who testify to the contrary are crumbled to dust, and their words swept away in the general mass of lies when God shall purify the earth!

Connected with this, is the character of the family: and on this I say as I said—concerning the character of our brother—I feel myself bound to defend the innocent always when opportunity offers. Had not those who are notorious for lies and dishonesty, also assailed the character of the family I should pass over them here in silence; but now I shall not forbear. It has been industriously circulated that they were dishonest, deceitful and vile. On this I have the testimony of responsible persons, who have said and will say, that this is basely false; and besides, a personal acquaintance for seven years, has demonstrated that all the difficulty is, they were once poor, (yet industrious,) and have now, by the help of God, arisen to note, and their names are like to, (indeed they will,) be handed down to posterity, and had among the righteouse.—They are industrious, honest, virtuous and liberal to all. This is their character; and though many take advantage of their liberality, God will reward them; but this is the fact, and this testimony shall shine upon the records of the saints, and be recorded on the archives of heaven to be read in the day of eternity, when the wicked and perverse, who have vilely slandered them without cause or provocation, reap their reward with the unjust, where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth—if they do not repent.

Soon after this visit to Cumorah, a gentleman from the south part of the State, (Chenango County,) employed our brother as a common laborer, and accordingly he visited that section of the country; and had he not been accused of digging down all, or nearly so, the mountains of Susquehannah, or
causing others to do it by some art of
magic and invisibility. I should leave this, for the
present, unnoticed. You will remember,
in the mean time, that those who seek
to vilify his character, say that he has
always been notorious for his idleness.
This gentleman, whose name is Stowell, resided in the town of Bain-
bridge, on or near the head waters of the
Susquehanna river. Some forty
miles south, or down the river, in the
town of Harmony, Susquehanna
county, Pa. is said to be a cave or sub-
terraneous recess, whether entirely
formed by art or not I am uninformed,
whether this matter; but such is
said to be the case,—where a company
of Spaniards, a long time since, when the
country was uninhabited by white
settlers, excavated from the bowels of the
earth ore, and coined a large quan-
tity of money; after which they secured
the cavity and evacuated, leaving a
part still in the cave, purposing to return
at some distant period. A long
time elapsed and this account came
from one of the individuals who was
first engaged in this mining business.
The country was pointed out and the
spot minutely described. This, I be-
lieve, is the substance, so far as my
memory serves, though I shall not
pledge my veracity for the correctness
of the account as I have given.—

Enough however, was credited of the
Spaniard's story, to excite the belief
of many, that there was a fine sum of
the precious metal lying coined in this
subterraneous vault, among whom was
our employer; and accordingly our
brother was required to spend a few
months with some others in excavating
the earth, in pursuit of this treasure.

While employed here he became ac-
quainted with the family of Isaac Hale,
of whom you read in several of the
productions of those who have sought
to destroy the validity of the book of
Mormon. It may be necessary here-
after, to refer you more particularly to
the conduct of this family, as their
influence has been considerably exerted
to destroy the reputation of our broth-
er, probably because he married a
daujer of the same, contrary to some
of their wishes, and in connection with
this, to certain statements of some others
of the inhabitants of that section of
country. But in saying this I do not
wish to be understood as uttering aught
against Mrs. Smith, (formerly Emma
Hale) She has most certainly evin-
ced a decidedly correct mind and un-
common ability of talent and judg-
ment, in a manifest willingness to ful-
fil, on her part, that passage in sacred
writ,—"and they twain shall be one
flesh."—by accompanying her hus-
band, against the wishes and advice of
her relatives, to a land of strangers:
and however I may depurate their ac-
tions, can say in justice, her character
stands as fair for morality, piety and
virtue, as any in the world. Though
you may say, this is a digression from
the subject proposed, I trust I shall be
indulged, for the purpose of satisfying
many, who have heard so many slan-
derous reports that they are lead to be-
lieve them true because they are not
contradicted; and besides, this gen-
eration are determined to oppose every
item in the form or under the pretence
of revelation, unless it comes through
a man who has always been more pure
than Michael the great prince; and as
this is the fact, and my opponents have
put me to the necessity, I shall be more
prolix, and have no doubt, before I
give up the point, shall prove to your
satisfaction, and to that of every man,
that the translator of the book of Mor-
mon is worthy the appellation of a seer
and a prophet of the Lord. In this I
do not pretend that he is not a man sub-
ject to passion like other men, beset
with infirmities and encompassed with
weaknesses; but if he is, all men were
so before him, and a pretence to the
contrary would argue a more than mor-
tal, which would at once destroy the
whole system of the religion of the Lord
Jesus; for he anciently chose the
weak to overcome the strong, the fool-

ish to confound the wise. (I mean con-
sidered so by this world,) and by the
foolishness of preaching to save those
who believe.

On the private character of our
brother I need add nothing further, at
present, previous to his obtaining the
records of the Nephites, only that
while in that country, some very offi-
cious person complained of him as a
disorderly person, and brought him be-
fore the authorities of the county; but
there being no cause of action he was
honourably acquitted. From this time
forward he continued to receive instruc-
tions concerning the coming forth of
the fulness of the gospel, from the
mouth of the heavenly messenger, un-
til he was directed to visit again the place where the records was deposited.

For the present I close, whith a thankful heart that I am permitted to see thousands rejoicing in the assurance of the promises of the Lord, confirmed unto them through the obedience of the everlasting covenant.

As ever your brother in the Lord Jesus.

OLIVER COWDERY.

To W. W. Phelps.

**Messenger and Advocate.**

**KIRTLAND, OHIO, OCTOBER, 1835.**

**No. 1. Vol. 2.**

As man is not always heard for his much speaking, we shall only say in this article, that our intentions are to labor faithfully in the great cause of our blessed Savior, that many souls may be brought to the knowledge of the truth and saved in the celestial kingdom; that the saints may have a portion of meet in due season, and be enabled to overcome the world, and its vanities, and prepare themselves for the blessings which shall come after much tribulation.

It is very desirable that the official members of the churches abroad, should forward all the information they may have, relative to the spread of the truth; the number of members in each branch; the additions from time to time; their growth in grace; their daily walk, and standing, and whatever else that may be of service to the cause: that we may all be edified of all, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

**SECRET PRAYER.**

We have long looked upon this subject with feelings of pleasure, while in secret musing upon the things of God, and contemplating upon his marvelous works. When the influences of his Spirit were shed forth and quickened our understanding and enlightened our minds, like the dew drops of the morning quickens and enlivens the herb of the field; or as the rays of the sun when he appears at the approach of the day spreads his lucid rays over the creation of God.

We read Mathew VI chap. 6 verse, which says: "Thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

When we take into consideration this subject, it brings many ideas to our minds that cannot be penned. We look at the teachings of the Savior of mankind, and find that he gave very interesting instruction; when speaking of secret prayer he says: "When thou prayest enter thou into thy closet," &c. This passage gives us an idea that we should go to some secluded place, and pray to our Father who seeth in secret, and he will reward us openly. We understand by this that God seeth in secret, and what we ask in secret, if we ask according to his will, we shall realize openly.

We are at a loss to conjecture how the idea got into the hearts of men, and more especially those who call themselves saints; to suppose that they were in secret, and prayed in secret, when the hills and vallies, "or woods and plains; were ringing with the reverberation of their voices. They would not need Elijah the prophet to tell them to call louder: for if their god had gone a journey; he could not help but hear them. In these matters we are not mistaken: for what we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, that we know of a surety.

We would advise the saints to read and practice the sixth chapter of Mathew, it is so full of instruction, that we cannot pass over it without inviting