



Chapter 1 OUR FAMILY

ORGANIZATION

As your compiler writes about our family and its organization, reference is not just to mother, father, and the children, but to a family whose roots go deep into history. Yet our family, an institution as old as time, is (along with all other families) struggling for its very existence against the strains and philosophies of modern life. We, with others, search for identity and independence. Any family larger than two generations finds it difficult in today's complexities to remain close without the conviction that it is important to do so.

The strength of any family, whether it be of one, two, three, or more generations, can no longer be taken for granted. In a time when so much family life has splintered, when so much isolates the individual from his past, those of us who belong to the Church must envision our role as more than working out our own salvation, we must bring the consciousness of eternal heritage to a lineage that extends in both directions of time, to the past as well as to the future.

Our relationships within our own multigenerational family can give us what we call a continuity between generations. They give us a feeling of our heritage which in all instances is a great blessing to us. The heritage that we enjoy today from our forefathers gives us the feeling of responsibility to carry on in the future that which we have been blessed with from the past.

We are in a changing pattern of family life. In earlier years family members, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, particularly, lived close to one another and spent a great deal of time together. Their homes were in the same neighborhood much more frequently than is the case today. Married children and their families might live in the same house with their parents, or in separate houses on the same property. In Biblical times we know that often a young married couple would attach their tent or house to the end of that belonging to their parents. But the strength that this sort of thing lends to family life can no longer be taken for granted. Many developments now oppose the family as that institution which the Prophet Joseph Smith described as the "fundamental unit of society, both in time and in eternity". On this subject, both ancient and modern revelation is very clear. Today many sociologists and scientists who deal with the understanding of people and their relationships in society have expressed alarm that social pressures and changing family patterns now threaten to fragment and destroy the family. Government leaders, as well as sociologists, feel the family is the Number 1 socializing institution that gives children their first exposure to freedom, civil rights, and to a sense of law and order.

How much more, therefore, we realize its importance in bringing to our children in the Belnap family their first exposure to the eternal purposes of family interpersonal relationships. In a day when the forces of good and evil are more intensely polarized than ever before we must look to our family as not only providing the opportunity, but the necessary means by which we will hold our loved ones close and bring about our exaltation. Sociologists, as well, recognize that blood ties and the extended family are the best ways to maintain a solid society.

At all costs the home must be preserved, and the larger the home and the more relatives one gathers about, apparently the more stability there is to the home environment. Having lived among and observed many cultures around the world, in the last decade, your compiler fears for the future of the next generation. The cost and effort to maintain our multigenerational family as it grows and expands in size, and with many of its members being widely separated, is a difficult challenge. But it is imperative, I feel, to the spiritual survival of our "elect" offspring. Nothing, in my opinion, can give greater security to the next generation than to answer their needs for identity and to find love and security through the close association with the many loved ones in our family organization. The modern permissive society and its philosophy of existentialism are not only capable of destroying, but are actually accomplishing today the destruction of all we stand for and hope for in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Prophet Isaiah revealed to us exactly where we are headed if we continue on the same course the world is taking today. (Isaiah 24: excerpts from verses 1-6 and 19-20); "Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste and turneth it upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth is also defiled unto the inhabitants thereof because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

The cause of all that we are experiencing today, like Isaiah prophesied, is the lack of unity. Many are not united today in the everlasting law of the covenant. The law of the Priesthood is not recognized and it has been largely lost throughout the world, "They have broken the everlasting covenant." It appears that there is a need for a unification of the inhabitants of the earth, first in families, and only then can unity be achieved in Church, community, and nation. This unity must be connected with the powers of heaven.

Paul also prophesied concerning this restoration of the "law of the covenant" designed to bind and seal the families of the earth in preparation for the Kingdom of God. (Ephesians 1:10) "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth; even in Him." In fulfillment of that prophecy, the Lord in our day told the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants (Section 1:17-23) "Wherefore, I the Lord knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth; called upon my servant Joseph Smith Jr. — to cause — that mine everlasting covenant might be established." Further in the Doctrine and Covenants (Section 78:11) "Wherefore a commandment I give unto you, to prepare and organize yourselves by a bond or everlasting covenant that cannot be broken." The Prophet Joseph Smith on enlarging on this in one of his own family reunions with his parents, brothers, and sisters, and their children, had this to say, "And again blessed of the Lord is my father and also my mother and also my brothers and sisters; for they shall yet find redemption in the house of the Lord (referring to the temple) and their offspring shall be a blessing, a joy

and comfort to them. And blessed is my father, for the hand of the Lord shall be over him — and he shall behold himself as an olive tree whose branches are bowed down with much fruit. Like Adam, of old, he shall stand in the midst of his posterity and shall be called a prince over them and he shall be numbered among those of old holding the right and patriarchal priesthood."

President John Taylor stated that, "Family unity begins when a father holding the priesthood and having participated in the new and everlasting covenant of celestial and eternal marriage has a right to officiate in the patriarchal order as the patriarch of his own family."

So what have we done and what must we do in the future? We belong to the Church that has the power now to seal upon the earth and seal in the heavens. The first place we have started is with our own family. We must continue to live in such a way that we can qualify to enter into the temple and there be sealed as family units for time and all eternity, to a righteous lineage of Belnaps which stem from the House of Ephraim in Israel of old. We must do the same in the future as has been done in the past by our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. We must give to our children the heritage of the priesthood as we have given to our antecedents the blessings of eternal family unity. This is the beginning of a unity that is eternal.

Some members of the Church hold to the mistaken notion that genealogical and temple work and the formal organization of families is something that ought to wait for the Millennium. We in the Belnap Family Organization do not hold to this notion of procrastination or disunity, and strive rather instead to obey the commandments of the Lord.

We have provided through our family organization the opportunity to unite ourselves for time and eternity with our ancestors and provide the full power of the Priesthood for them, as well as for our posterity, and there must be a perpetuation of our organized family circle consisting of all living relatives. Within the framework of our organized family which follows priesthood principles, lies the ability to more effectively advance the individual members toward eternal life than any organization on earth. The programs of the Church are best carried out when channeled through such a family. The basis of the Kingdom of God is thereby formulated.

At the head of any family organization stands a father. He is the head of his house; he is the patriarch of his posterity. Such a natural and obvious focus in this dispensation of the history of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is our own patriarchal convert ancestor, Gilbert Belnap. About him this book evolves. We will discuss his posterity in considerable detail, but we will also discuss his ancestry. He is the focus in time as far as we are concerned, and through whom the full blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its eternal covenant are fulfilled, pertaining not only to our ancestry, but to his posterity. He presided over us here on the earth and will undoubtedly have that presiding role in the eternities to come. He based his role as the father of his posterity, using the principles of righteousness and the virtues of godliness. He followed the pattern of the Prophet Brigham Young, with whom he was closely associated. Brigham Young gives us the pattern as follows (Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, Volume 2, pages 107 to 111). "All the families of the earth will be governed as one family and every man will preside over his own family. I will show you the order of the Kingdom as regards to my own family; one of my sons is placed here,

another there, another there, and so on. Yet I shall be their ruler, their savior and governor. They would have innumerable posterity, but all would join in harmony with my counsel; I should console, comfort, and advise them all. This is the order of the Kingdom, that men shall rise up as Kings and Priest of God."

Patriarch John Smith has advised us, "I thank God that so many are gathered together of one blood. All that is lacking is for us to organize as families. We cannot redeem our forefathers and our posterity by ourselves. There is sort of a willful disposition in us and we make ourselves a multitude of trouble by not being obedient to the patriarchal pattern."

Families have a natural tendency to organize and we have found this natural predisposition within our own Belnap family organization. Typical of the need that families have to get together is our marvelous custom of reunions and holidays, especially our summer family reunions. One of the very wonderful things of life is a sense of belonging and one of the most wonderful things to belong to is a loyal, affectionate family, with whom one can feel a real oneness. Parents, of course, are primarily the ones who can keep a family close, but even after the parents have left this life, families ought to rally around one another, keep close and not pull apart, and always preserve a gathering place and carry on the traditions, and see that the next generation becomes acquainted; this sense of belonging, this togetherness is a source of eternal strength, of comfort, of safety, of peace and of protection. And we who have it have more to live up to; more to account for; more to keep us in safe paths and high purposes. If our family can perpetuate and achieve the sense of a father and a mother and a grandfather and a grandmother truly being the patriarch and matriarch of the family, there is a great deal more strength we can continually receive. We look to the older generation as sort of our elder statesmen and senior diplomats in our large family. They hold the generations together and very often save the family peace. In our family there is a free interchange of even physical possessions between our members. How much more important it is to share the spiritual possessions and powers which are ours. Our older generation needs these things from the younger generation (yes, even love) just as the children require them from more than just their parents. Grandparents and other members of the older generation contribute in many ways to a child's development. The child who has no contact with older relatives is definitely the loser. Grandparents and great-grandparents are quite special. The children look to them as an extension of mother and dad. Many of our relatives live far away and may rarely, if ever, be seen or heard of. This is sad and regrettable. It is often the case, however, in the vast expanse of our modern day mobility for families to be in opposite portions of the country. All families within our organization should put real effort into corresponding with relatives with whom they want to keep in touch. The concept of the regular family get-together or family reunion is vital for the well being of young children and during the teen years it appears to be extremely helpful for the young person to feel that he belongs to a family of multiple generations, even though the family contact is minimal because of distance. We recognize strongly a real need to cultivate a sense of continuity in the lives of our family members. In life's high moments of great loss or sorrow we have the need to be related to a specific group in a unique way, in a group in which the individuals differ, yet have a unity in a sense of belonging. This has given strength to all of our members.

We want all of our children to know the privilege of having as their grandfathers and grandmothers people of such wisdom and delight that they will want

to go back at regular holiday times and family reunion occasions; times that knit us closely together. To be able to reach across the generations they will never think that it is bad to be old and good to be young; they will come to know that life is really rich at all ages. They will know that they have a treasure in their grandparents, and great grandparents, their uncles, aunts, and cousins, as well as their own immediate family — their parents, their brothers and sisters — that will teach them to value life highly.

We have formed a Belnap Family Organization capable of adapting to any size or number of relatives, and can likewise keep in communication. Although our organization consists of living members only, it does include all of the descendants of our common antecedent, Gilbert Belnap. We also have allowed an organization to adapt to the 15 children of Gilbert Belnap and they in turn have formed their own family organizations. It has been our tradition to meet on the even years with the whole Belnap family organization, the odd years each of the 15 descendants of Gilbert Belnap, Adeline, and Henrietta, have met with their sub-family groups in a family reunion. Even sub divisions of these family organizations exist and we have followed the pattern of the Church in getting together on Fast Sunday Evening (the recommended time) and have perpetuated with regular monthly get-togethers our three or four generation family organizations where we have, in essence, an extension of the "Family Home Evening." The traditions of our ancestors, their life stories, their histories, testimonies, blessings, their trials, sorrows, as well as their joys and exultations, have become an excellent basis for conversation and many of life's lessons can be drawn from these



informal Family Home Evening get-togethers where we can draw on a vast reservoir of material from our family traditions. It is the intent of this book, as a product of your Family Organization, to serve as the basis for enrichment of these associations, not only from the standpoint of the fun and ease that they offer in terms of conversation, but the spiritual uplift which we hope they will bring. Receiving from the past and transmitting heritage to the future makes it essential that each level of our families find organization from which they can expand in size as many generations as desired. It has been, first of all, essential in our Family Organization that members may link themselves in bonds of love, association and kindred affection. This, however, to perpetuate itself, must be more than just social contact. Our organization must be a living service agency to its members. Service within the family usually falls into four major categories. First of all, we must keep contact with all living members. Small organizations find this simple, accomplished by phone and mail. Our larger organization is required to use archive and genealogical facilities, (as well as modern scientific devices, such as computer print-outs), to maintain a mailing list and to keep contact with all living members who descend from our common ancestor, Gilbert Belnap. We have a computerized registry of our organized families, but we must continually upgrade and update this registry with new names and addresses. We also maintain contact through the Genealogical Society of the Church and its Family Organization Registry. The great Priesthood Missionary Program of the Church should first, and above all, be family-centered. We have provided the basis whereby we can keep in contact with our families, and our goal must be continually kept in mind to see that all of our family are encompassed within the framework of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, our family must meet as often as possible. Where geographically feasible, the immediate three generations should make contact monthly. If close proximity is not existent, then annually through our sub-family organizations or the main Belnap Family Organization itself. Programming of such get-togethers are enriched by the heritage of the past. Retention of historical biography and autobiography with constant use of the material to aid younger generations in establishing not only their identity, but their goals in life, is essential for our perpetuity. Our family reunions of any size should be more than just a "fun time," but one of enriching future lives of participants by the oral, as well as written, traditions of the past. This is home teaching and Family Home Evening at its best.

Thirdly, our family should be primarily concerned for the welfare of its own. It is a period of world history in which society and government tear from the family not only what is their right and privilege, but responsibility as well. We sense that deterioration of the family results, strangely enough, by government paternalism. Psychological, social, and economic needs, even in a affluent society, and more so in an impoverished society, are best met within the framework of our own family. A family functioning effectively on both the temporal and spiritual plane, brings Priesthood Welfare closer to the law of consecration than anything we do on earth.

Fourth, genealogical research and preservation of past pedigrees and of future generations is primarily the responsibility of our family organization. Archives and genealogical libraries perform a vital role, but are still only service areas. Research is tedious, difficult and expensive and is best achieved by all of us collectively in order to relieve the burden of a few. Parents, children and all living

relatives within our organization going to the temple for our kindred dead is the capstone of Priesthood Genealogy and Temple Work.

Through our family organization, exists the opportunity for the specialist as well as the beginner to become directed into areas where he can be most useful in offering his time and talents. Our family organization, being genealogically and historically centered, has as its major goal the compiling and recording of genealogical and historical information pertaining to the common ancestors of our members. Cooperation in genealogical research through our family organization is one of the most successful means of extending and providing pedigrees and compiling family genealogies. Our family organization promotes coordination of research among individuals researching the same family lines, affords opportunities for specialization in research, pools time and money resources (and channels their wise use), and fosters fellowship and understanding among its members.

Throughout the world people are becoming increasingly interested in finding out more about their families. We have noted several individuals who are descendants of our common immigrant ancestor, Abraham Belknap (who came to New England in 1635), have found a common interest with ourselves. Communication channels have been opened up between us in order to give us vast reservoirs of information on the many thousands of descendants of our common ancestry. We have found that these individuals want to know more about the lives of our ancestors — their occupations, accomplishments, what their names were and where they lived. In discovering ancestors, individuals seem to discover themselves and are better able to define their own goals and to know what they want and expect out of life. Frequent association with other family members in our organization through both personal contact and through correspondence, brings definite feelings of concern for the family and a greater appreciation of family ties. By working in our family organization, all who have participated have become "family oriented" and feel that they are part of an eternal operation.

Our family organization functions on a system based on the formation of a corporate structure and a non-profit association. We come here under both the laws of the State of Utah, as well as the laws of the nation. We are incorporated through both the State of Utah as well as with the U.S. Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue organization. We have a specific assigned number which allows our family members to contribute and donate to the family organization on a tax deductible basis. We meet all of the criteria for a charitable organization that is non-profit in its structure and philanthropic in its purposes.

Our organization functions through elected officers, not only after the pattern of the priesthood, but in a manner similar to civic organizations. We have a president and a number of vice-presidents who usually ascend in terms of their experience. By serving on the executive committee of the family organization the vice presidents prepare for their assuming its presiding role. We have a secretary and treasure, a genealogist and historian.

The president is the officer responsible for the overall management of the organization. However, the president always operates through his Executive Committee and Board of Directors which is made up of a representative of each of the 15 children of Gilbert, Adeline and Henrietta Belnap. We have three vice-presidents, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, who ascend most often in terms of responsibility and are given assignments to function after the various needs of the family such as family contact, reunions, family welfare and genealogical functions. We have a secretary

who is adept at preparing official correspondence and maintaining the records of the organization. We have a treasurer who is able through knowledge of finance and bookkeeping to assume fiscal responsibility and keep records available for the perusal of all members as well as those State and governmental agencies concerned with our non-profit organization structure. We have a genealogist who advances and coordinates the program of genealogical research and a historian who is able to advise us and select those assistants necessary in order to maintain a perpetual history whereby this, as well as future volumes can be expanded as truly the family Book of Remembrance.

Through our constitution and by-laws, we insure long term stability and operational consistency and harmony within our family organization. (The by-laws are published in their complete form in the appendix of this volume.)

Since organizing, we have based our perpetuity on the active participation of family members who promote and maintain order for the organization in order to achieve the purposes for which it was created. We have found that family members are usually eager to assist in the various programs of the family, such as its genealogical effort; however, they do not often know how or what to do. It has been the role of the family organization to teach and utilize members of the family in its research program by dividing the research effort into small job assignments and carefully explaining how to go about getting the jobs done. With only brief orientation, the family members we have found can assist in searching census records, books, and vital records, and so forth. With this assistance of family members, we have been provided with genealogical data and the primary genealogist of the family organization is left more free to coordinate and to document the accumulated material. We are extremely dependent on your trips to the libraries, cemetery copying project, trips to courthouses, and state archives, family newsletters and magazines, restorations of old homes, the building of family parks, family scholarship funds, the printing of family histories, old picture collections, and family pageants or plays. All of these are examples of ways and means whereby we can promote a gradually increasing archive and history of worthwhile family activities. For our organization to exist we must continue to provide definite services for you, the membership of our family organization. The research service provided by the combined talents of family members is the major service afforded by our family organization and as new information is discovered concerning our family pedigree, this information is distributed to you in our annual or semi-annual publication of the Belnap Family Crier. This information will be in the future compiled periodically in book form such as this volume so that all members of the family might have a permanent collection of our genealogy and histories.

We maintain an efficient central file as a permanent possession of the family organization, in which is found all of the primary and original data from which our pedigrees, family groups and histories are maintained. Communication, however, is the most vital factor of all in maintaining family unity. We cannot bring the benefits and services of the family organization to its thousands of members unless we maintain a constant and upgraded family registry, name and address file. To each of you we are dependent for this maintenance. As we publish this printed family genealogy and history, we are conscious and aware of the responsibility we have in making highly accurate compilations and insuring that only proven data is included. Reference to the sources of data are extremely important. We have made reference to these, not only page by page, but have given

you a complete original source or an abstraction of that source in a book and microfilm compilation found in the Family Files, a copy of which is in the Library of the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This volume has likewise been distributed to major public libraries and genealogical facilities for the Church and non-member libraries throughout the United States in order to provide for the many Belnaps (members as well as non-members of the Church, alike) the opportunity of identifying themselves with our lineage.

The most important to our family organization continuity, however, is involvement. Each member of the organization must feel personally involved preferably by role or responsibility. Every get-together of officers or members ought to involve every person. When assignments are made they ought to be meaningful. Each member should taste the sweetness of contributing something to our family, for in such is love most easily taught. The environment of home and family — yes, the multi-generational family — is the environment most conducive to love. Unless love can be lived in the family, how can it be experienced in the world?

Gilbert Belnap, the first to join the Church in this dispensation now has approximately 7,000 descendants. This posterity, largely affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has brought much "priesthood power" to our lineage. It has brought great love into our large family.

The years move swiftly. The blessed years when we have our loved ones with us are all too short in this life. To make that association eternal should be uppermost in all of our minds. No matter what comes or goes, and no matter where time takes us, our families should keep close for a sense of belonging is one of the sweetest and most satisfying feelings we shall experience in our eternal journey. There is no finer thing to belong to than a patriarchally-oriented family and it will be so always and forever.

To be totally meaningful on our lives and in the lives of our children, however, we must extend our family beyond the confines of Gilbert Belnap and his descendants. As we look at our entire lineage, as far back as genealogy and history has record, we find invaluable indications that will serve as signposts for not only us living today, but for future generations to come. We note in our day a situation of "moral unpreparedness". We find that the teaching of policies and history in our schools has, for the most part, been emptied of all the elements of greatness — that is to say a conviction that history is not the meaningless tale of a race from which we descended, but the record of great men and great peoples, struggling indomitably to rise out of sloth and squalor. Young people of our generation have been deprived of their birthright which is to be conscious that they are the children of a high destiny in the line of great men who performed great deeds, members of a noble family throughout the centuries who had faith when men were hopeless, who fortified reason against unreason, vindicated justice against violence, and in the jungle of animal passion cleared the spaces where the air is free and clear and tranquil. No people can be equal to its fate unless it has the consciousness of greatness. The consciousness of greatness can be preserved only by the memory of greatness and a sense of history is the secret magic by which a people can be lifted to a sense of their own noble heritage, a heritage which stems from the concept that truly we know our identity as the actual children of God. Ofttimes historians who think they have explained the greatness of the past have emptied history of all significant meaning and of its value as a

source of wisdom, of its power to teach by example in the lives and precepts of individual men. The fact is that no nation or no family can live and remain a nation or a family or a people if it ceases to remember and no longer respects its own history. For the American nation, for the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, for its individual families, there can be perpetuation only in the realization of a common consciousness of a great past. With no sense that there is an historic destiny in which we all participate, with only the feeling that nothing great was ever done of importance other than day by day existence, no family, no community, no church, and no nation will cohere. Each will crumble into factions of self-seeking individuals.

It is true that no people can live and remain as a people, a community, or a nation if the people within it lose the common consciousness of a great past. It is equally true that a church such as ours must be vitalized and sustained by the same sure foundations. The Lord knew the profound import of both these facts when he instructed Lehi and his Book of Mormon colony to secure their historical and genealogical record on the brass plates as a basis for their future national and religious life. This book of remembrance served as an instrument for preserving their culture. The later colony of Mulekites suffered a fatal national and religious decline for want of this very thing. The recorded history of these two Book of Mormon nations is both the positive and negative proof of my above mentioned position.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been very careful to preserve and teach its history from the days of Joseph Smith. Many of the younger members of the church, however, have not come to understand the profound relationship between our latter day history and the great drama of God's dealings with our fathers before and during the Restoration of the Gospel. It is the sincere hope of the compiler of this book that its contents may assist the youth of our family to better realize this. There is an ancient glorious past, with its great heritage and destiny. If our youth can see this actual family and historical relationship between Biblical times and themselves it will measurably increase their faith in every phase of the Restored Gospel. With the exception of our Lord, Jesus Christ, no man ever laid claim to greater manifestations of the divine power than did Joseph Smith. If his claims are correct it is only logical to expect that a century after his time the expanding volume of true history would begin to sustain and vindicate his work. That is exactly what is happening and to our own family history we can bear testimony to the growing vital faith in our claims to priesthood and through our genealogical and temple work can be obtained a careful study of our marvelous historical background. The historical roots of our family stem from a common heritage to the House of Israel. Our convert ancestor, Gilbert Belnap, and his wives, through latter day revelation and patriarchal blessings established their lineage as part of Ephraim, one of the tribes of the House of Israel. Our destiny is intertwined with Israel, both past and present, as well as future. If we are to fulfill our destiny and grow as a family, it must become hand in glove with the fulfillment of the destiny of Ephraim within the framework of the House of Israel. We belong to a lineage which from early Biblical times has been called a chosen people. Ofttimes our ancestry in the past have considered themselves mistakenly chosen without realizing that the "chosen" concept was a choosing to responsibility and an obligation to fulfill.

If I am to speak to you about the concept of our family belonging to a chosen people and their significance in the world, I do so without any sense of race or

discrimination, but do so humbly with a sense that we have a divine destiny and an important obligation and responsibility to fulfill. As we look back at our lineage in Biblical history, we realize that much of the world looks upon the Bible as an uninspired book. We in the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ draw upon the resources of the other Standard Works of the Church for the basic concepts of our theology. The Bible story is the dealings of God, the Father of us all, with His children, the human race, and specifically it is the story of one particular family of mankind. That family is called Israel. The Lord made covenants between Himself and that family of Israel and at times that family fulfilled its destiny. At other times it withdrew from its responsibility and sought other gods, philosophies, or ways of life. The family oriented society that God had prescribed in the Bible was the foundation of the successes pointed up in the Bible. The fragmentation of the family and its disbursement brought about not only the failure of the family itself, but the community and the civilizations to which it belonged. The Bible is the story of a family which extends down through all periods of time and is a living, active, and viable chronicle. It is not a record of the dead or of the past only, but is a current and contemporary chronicle of a family that is actually now fulfilling its destiny.

Our Belnap family does not confine itself to present-day history and our organization represents a family which is not limited just to the descendants of Gilbert Belnap. It is rather a family and a lineage which extends back in time deeply into the past. It is a family which belongs to a lineage which was chosen for responsibility; a group of people which have influenced more than any other people in the history of the earth, the destiny of the world. Many of these people find their history and their family lineages in the dealings of God with their family the subject of both the Bible and Book of Mormon. These books are histories of those who have gone before and those who live now. They are histories of those who filled prophecy and those who will fulfill prophecy. They are the stories of the "fathers and the children" of the human race.

For the benefit of those who read this volume and who have not given detailed study to this matter, let us review some salient points of evidence. Your compiler shall have to take you back to one of your great ancestors, a man whose names has spanned 4,000 years. His name is Abraham and his home city, Ur, of the Chaldees. We know how he lived, we know the arts, the sciences, the financial system which were familiar to him. It was a brilliant civilization, but a brittle one, doomed to disaster because the Lord was not in it. Wherever a culture's material progress outranks its moral and spiritual progress, it rings its own death knell. The man Abraham is no more a myth or legend than his city or his civilization. The same is true of each of our other antecedents on back to the time of Abraham. We will try to represent them as living individuals in the framework of the time in which they resided. Some have had direct calls from the Lord, as did Abraham. Others were led and directed in fulfillment of their destiny as though they had been foreordained to their responsibility in the plan of things. By direct call from the Lord, Abraham was lead to depart away from idolatry and materialism. Many centuries later our antecedent, with the same name, Abraham, was to accomplish the same migratory pattern. Six generations following Abraham our convert ancestor Gilbert Belnap was to make a modern day Israelitish exodus from his family to the frontiers and edges of civilization.

The simple record of it is that Abraham of old "obeyed and went out not knowing whither he went". How oft was this to be repeated in our own family history down through time.

In the course of years it became clear to Abraham in words which have come down to us that he was to be the progenitor of a distinct people whose destiny would reach to the remotest ages. He was to become a great nation and "many nations". His name was to become great; all nations of the earth were to be blessed through him; father of many nations; kings and rulers were to come out of him and his God was to be the God of his lineage through all ages of time.

Abraham had many sons, but the line was to descend through one of them named Isaac. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And through Isaac to Jacob and thence through Jacob's sons — Jacob's name being changed to Israel. These were the Hebrews, which means "immigrant" or "outlander", for Abraham had been an immigrant from Ur of the Chaldees. Thenceforth they were also called Israelites after Jacob whose name became Israel.

In Egypt where the Hebrew families had gone because of famine, they became a great nation, led out by Moses to the land that had been promised them, they organized their government and established an economic system which represents all that our government and people are crying for today and which must become our own system before long. The Prophet Joseph Smith on one occasion said that "Israel as a nation was under the direct government of heaven and not only had they judges and kings anointed of God"; hence says the prophet, "The Lord is our king; the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our law giver and he shall reign over us." In the history of the kings of Israel we find the Lord and the prophets interfering as much in their civil as their religious affairs as the book of Kings abundantly testifies. (Times and Seasons, March 15, 1844).

And still they grew and their destiny expanded until in King David's time it was told them by a prophet that one more removal awaited them — they were to be replanted in a land of their own, a land they did not know, and there they would be established to be removed no more. They became a peculiar people in the earth, separate from the nations by reasons of their religion, their social code, and their economic system; they were a distinct people with a distinct mission in history and they were the vehicle by which was given to the world the concept of the one living God. The time came, as foretold, when this nation split into two parts, one part to be called the Jews. The Jews were but a comparatively small group. The others went out to fulfill their destiny and you can identify them not only by their present fulfilling of these destinies, but by the waymarks which they left on their path as they journeyed to their appointed place. We know who the Jews are; but if we did not know we could identify them by means of the appointed experiences it was foretold they should undergo among the nations. We may identify Israel — now known by others names, in the selfsame way. The scriptures declare this message in such a way that there can be no doubt of the idea of a chosen people. They declare that "when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the Children of Israel, for the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot (or measuring rod) of His inheritance." Moses declared, "The Lord, thy God, has chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, apart from all people that are upon the face of the earth."

Yet man will rise and demand, "By what right does God choose one people above another?" I like that form of question. It is much better than asking, by what right the Lord degrades one people beneath another, although that is implied. God's grading is always upward. If He raises up a nation, it is that other nations may be raised up through its ministry. The divine selection is not a prize, a compliment paid to the man or the people — it is a burden imposed. The appointment of a chosen people is not a concession to the vanity of a "superior people", it is a yoke bound upon the necks of those who are chosen for special service.

This divine selection of a nation or a people for a special purpose has always seemed so great a thing that men have continually asked, "Why?" It is a great thing and many attempts have been made to explain it. Hear Moses saying, "Ask now of the days that are past which were before thee since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the fire as thou hast heard it and live? Or hath God said to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by tests or by signs and by wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm?" It is certainly a great thing. It was a great thing when this American nation was taken out of the midst of another great nation and made a separate constellation among the powers of the world. We were to see this dramatic role take place within the framework of our own family and to see how the destiny of our family was dramatically changed by this great New World movement. Its inceptions were in the British Isles, where Israel concentrated over the centuries, and our story, although focusing in that land, does not begin there. Our roots go more deeply into the past. Yet Britain was to become a major focus and the richest concentration of the blood of Ephraim, following its dispersal from the land of Israel in Biblical times.