

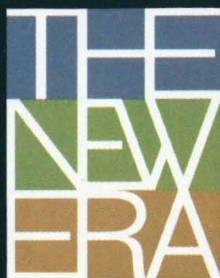
THE
NEW
ERA

July 1978



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"Prayer"

As a missionary in the Scotland Edinburgh Mission I would like to thank the *New Era* for the March issue and for the excellent article "Prayer" by President Spencer W. Kimball. It was really inspiring. I would also like to thank my parents for always holding family prayer each day. As a missionary I have realized how important prayer is. God really does answer prayers.
ELDER RANDALL C. ASHWORTH
Scotland Edinburgh Mission

Raindrops

The *New Era* has once again touched my heart. The story "Wiping up Raindrops" really has a special meaning to me. Several years ago I lost my grandmother on Christmas morning, a few years after having lost my grandfather. It was really a sad experience, but I realize that they are together in a much better place. The story brought back many beautiful memories of my grandparents.
ELDER RUSSEL DEAN TIDLUND
California Sacramento Mission

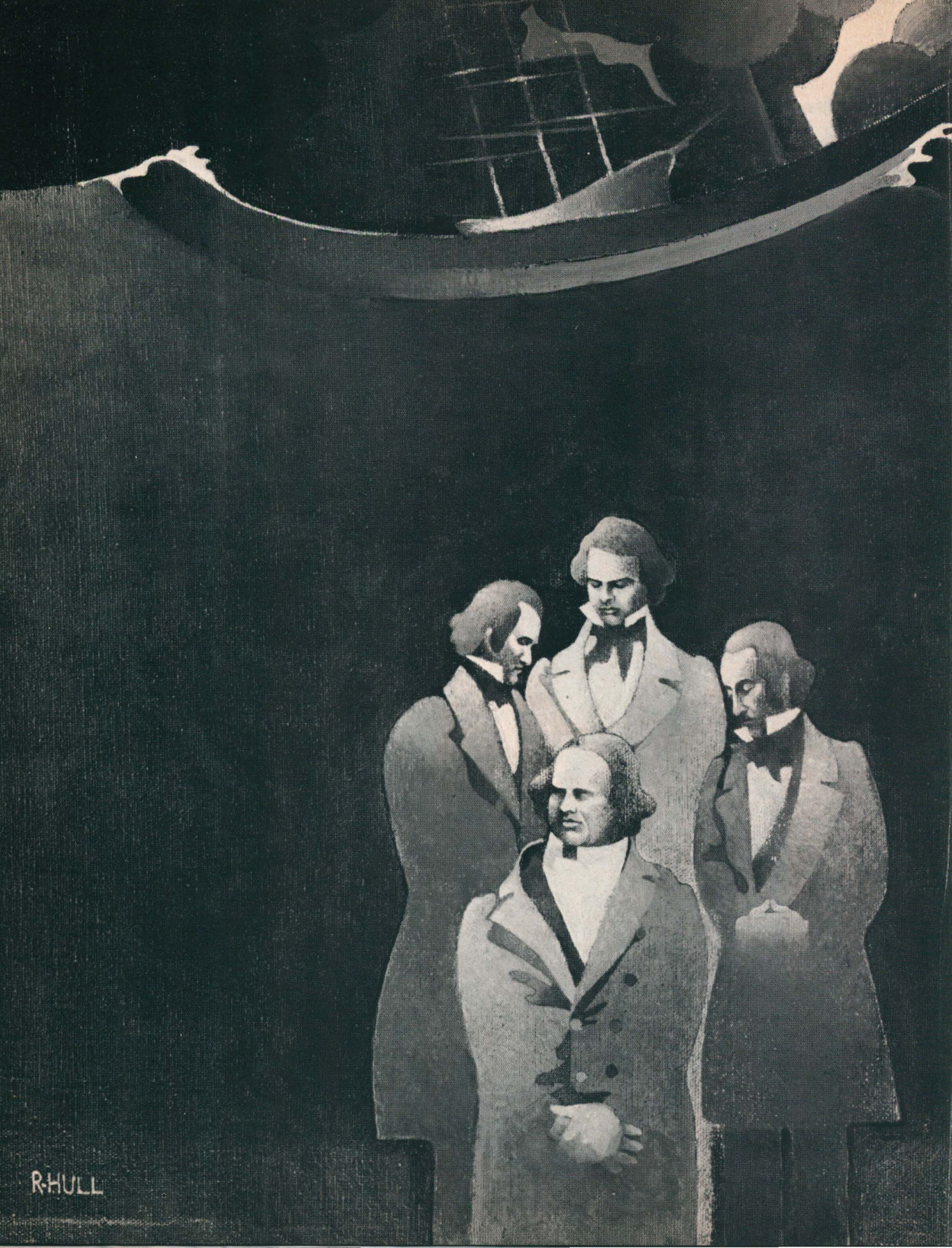
The quest and the rut

President Kimball's article on prayer in the March 1978 *New Era* was most inspiring. It was just what I needed. Having fallen into the same rut as many other people, I too prayed once a day and when called upon. Yet something was missing. It was too easy to get in the habit of using "vain repetitions," and prayer didn't have real meaning.

As I read that article, I made a personal goal to make my prayers more meaningful. This goes along very well with our "Quest for Exaltation" in seminary.
A NEW ERA READER
Preston, Idaho

Pineapples?

As we stop in for dinner every day, the first place everyone sprints for is down to the foyer to see if any mail has come. Today the anticipated letter from home wasn't there, but in its place was a big envelope from Salt Lake City, Utah. Inside it was the March *New Era*. What a great way to celebrate President Kimball's birthday! The



R.HULL

Atlantic Crossing on the Ship *Olympus*

by William Hartley

Illustrated by Richard Hull

July 1978



As anxious European Saints crowded aboard the beautiful sailing ship *Olympus*, an apostle prophesied that their voyage would be terrible—but successful.

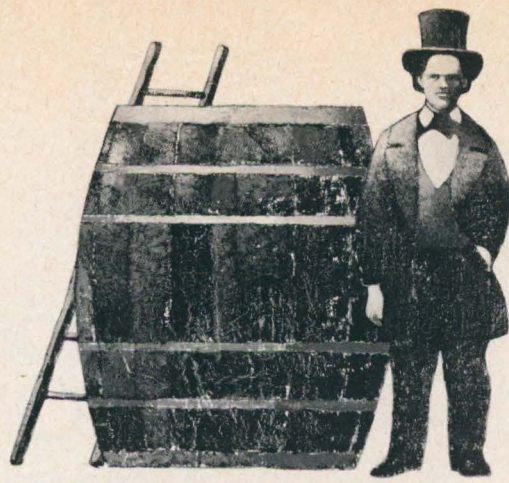
Elder John Taylor, presiding over the French Mission, was in England on Church business in early March 1851. He took time to bid good-bye to friends—converts and missionaries—then leaving Liverpool for America aboard the *Olympus*. One friend was William Howell, who the previous year had opened up France for the preaching of the gospel, and who was named presiding elder for the 245 Saints taking the trip. Elder Taylor wished the travelers well. Then he prophetically warned that the *Olympus* would be wracked by storms, that Saints would suffer from evil spirits and from sickness, but “that God would preserve them in the midst of all dangers, and lead them to a harbor of safety.”

Sailing time to New Orleans was normally about five weeks, ocean conditions permitting. Hopefully this company of Saints, departing March 4, would reach America by mid-April so they could travel up the Mississippi River before the spring and summer months brought killer cholera epidemics to that area. This, the seventh Mormon company to sail during the 1850-

51 emigrating season, would be the last one until the following January. Captain Wilson, an expert seaman, commanded the *Olympus*, its crew, the company of Saints, and the nearly 60 nonmember passengers.

The troubles predicted by Elder Taylor suddenly struck during one of the first nights out. Below deck nearly 400 souls were asleep in the tightly stacked berths along each side of the “extensive bedroom”—about 30 yards long and 8 wide. “In the dead of the night” a 13-year-old lad excitedly leaped from his bunk and at the top of his voice screamed over and over again the name of a fellow passenger. The boy’s parents and a brother and sister could not silence or subdue him. “It soon became apparent,” noted passenger Wilson Nowers, “that he was possessed of an evil spirit.” Through the administrations of the priesthood, the evil spirit was dispelled.

Another part of Elder Taylor’s prophecy likewise found quick fulfillment. Hardly had the *Olympus* entered the terrible Irish Sea when harsh headwinds whipped huge waves against the wooden vessel day and night. For three weeks many of the tossed-about passengers were seasick, “suffering intensely from the distressing affliction.” Finally, when a calm day brought relief,



*The captain gave approval
the top removed, and she*

the passengers felt the worst part of their voyage was behind them. But Captain Wilson's trained eyes, making a careful survey of the horizon, spotted a rapidly approaching cloud. At first it was no bigger than a man's hat, but it swelled and spread at an alarming rate.

Quickly the captain massed both shifts of the crew on deck and ordered all sails immediately shortened. He allowed Brother Nowers and a 20-year-old carpenter from Dover, Edmund Fuller, to stay aloft and help the crew. (Later in the voyage Mr. Fuller fell in love with a Mormon girl, Adelaide Jelley, and he joined the Church and married her in St. Louis.)

Barely were sails hauled in and secured, and passengers herded below deck, when the new storm struck the ship full force. The *Olympus* trembled and reeled "like a drunkard." The "regular white squall" snapped the foremast off and carried it overboard. Several men nearly went overboard with the broken mast, which, hanging by the ship's side, had to be cut loose from its stays with axes. Torrents of wind and water sprang the mainmast at the deck.

Thrown on her beam ends the *Olympus* became unmanageable. Into a fearfully dark night the ship struggled, battered by hurricane

winds. Seams of the vessel cracked, letting water seep into the hold.

Two hours after the storm began, about 8:00 P.M., four feet of water had poured into the hold and the ship's pumps were started. Above, knee-deep waters rushed over the decks, causing Brother Nowers and Mr. Fuller to lash themselves to the pumps they were manning to keep from being washed overboard. Hour after hour the storm raged. And the *Olympus* took on more and more water.

By midnight the captain, crew, and men on deck were despondent because the storm showed no signs of abating. Within earshot of Brother Nowers the captain ordered Second Mate Hamilton to go below deck and tell the Mormon's president, Elder Howell, that "if the God of the Mormons can do anything to save the ship and the people, they had better be calling on him to do so." The captain confessed that despite the crew's best efforts the *Olympus* was sinking at the rate of one foot per hour and that by daylight it would be on the bottom of the sea unless the storm ceased.

The second mate asked Brother Nowers to accompany him below to deliver the message to the Mormons. As soon as the crashing waves allowed, the two

messengers unbarred the companionway and ducked below. They found Elder Howell in his bed and told him the captain's appeal.

"Very well," answered the Mormon leader calmly. "You may tell Captain Wilson that we are not going to the bottom of the ocean for we embarked from Liverpool on a voyage for New Orleans, and we will arrive safely in that port. Our God will protect us." Mr. Hamilton returned to the deck and gave Captain Wilson the Mormons' answer.

Brother Nowers, dripping wet, could not help noticing the absolute chaos below deck. Everywhere unsecured trunks and packages rolled and skidded from one side to the other as the ship swayed and rolled. Some passengers were crying. Others prayed. Still others simply waited.

President Howell quickly arose, dressed, and called about a dozen brethren, including new convert Wilson Nowers, to his side. The leader instructed that each man in the circle take a turn to pray vocally that the Lord would spare the vessel. Elder Howell prayed last.

"While he was still engaged in prayer," said Brother Nowers, "I noticed a material change in the motion of the ship." Instead of rolling and pitching, the *Olympus* "seemed to tremble as one

or a large water barrel to be brought out on the deck,
ladders placed beside and inside it

suffering from the effects of a severe cold." He could not believe the ship was sinking. But he also could not believe that the storm had so suddenly ceased.

After the final hearty "amen" President Howell sent the prayer circle members back to bed. Brother Nowers, however, returned to his pumping duties on deck. There, astonished, he found that "the storm had miraculously ceased; the wind had gone down, and the waves were stilled immediately around the ship, while in the distance the billows were still raging." The *Olympus* trembled at so sudden a change.

Pumping continued until daylight. When the Sabbath day finally dawned, clear and bright, Captain Wilson admitted that he had done all he could do before calling on the Mormons and that only God's hand had saved the sinking ship.

While sailors rigged a jury mast to replace the broken foremast, passengers crowded onto the deck. Saints and nonmembers joined together in prayers of thanksgiving. The passengers put on clean clothes, and for the first time since leaving Liverpool, newly shaved faces appeared. A delegation of Saints obtained Captain Wilson's permission to hold Sabbath religious services.

That day, March 23, after sermons and hymns, a baptismal

service was conducted. During the three-week voyage a number of non-LDS passengers had been converted and wanted to be baptized. The captain gave approval for a large water barrel to be brought out on deck, the top removed, and short ladders placed beside and inside it. The barrel was filled waist deep with sea water. Twenty-one persons, male and female, were then baptized. The next day the converts were confirmed, the sacrament administered, and the sick anointed.

During the voyage the Saints' exemplary attitudes and conduct worked to good effect on others. Nonmembers attended the Saints' 10:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. prayer services and the regular preaching services at which five or six brethren delivered short addresses. They witnessed meetings where spiritual gifts—prophecy, speaking in tongues, and healings—were evident. They and their children attended the Mormon day schools and listened to evening lectures by elders on various secular topics. Such contacts with the Saints produced more conversions.

At the second baptismal service 20 males were baptized in the ocean itself. The ship's main hatch cover was suspended by ropes on the Atlantic's surface to

make a floating platform. Then, Counselor Smith and others sat on the platform with legs in the water, having a safety rope around their bodies. Each convert descended to the platform by rope ladder, with safety rope around the body and a stout belt around the waist. He sat to the left of the elder officiating, who grasped the belt around the waist by the right hand, and the clothing at the back of the neck with the left. The candidate's hands grasped the elder's wrists. Then the person "was placed beneath the briny wave and brought forth therefrom."

By the time the *Olympus'* passengers disembarked at New Orleans in late April and took the steamer *Atlantic* to St. Louis, 50 of the nonmember passengers had been converted and baptized.

At St. Louis the company split up. Some sought work there. Others boarded the steamer *Statesman* for the 13-day trip to Kanessville, Iowa, where 150 LDS wagons were being readied for the first trip west for the 1851 season. The final missionary success of the *Olympus* Saints came when the *Statesman's* cooks and deckhands, impressed by the goodness of their LDS passengers, left the boat en masse at Kanessville, intending to cross the plains and become part of the LDS society in Utah. ■