

# PURE RELIGION

## A Mormonish Jew

When Betty saw the two young men dressed in white shirts and dark ties coming up the road, she thought, “Oh, boy; here we go again.” She had seen the missionaries many times and had even spoken with them before, but each time she had told them she was Jewish, and each time they had left soon after.

Betty was an elderly woman who lived alone in her home on the East Coast of the United States. She had been severely ill and was just now beginning to recover. She thought that if only she could plant a little flowerbed outside her home, perhaps that would cheer her up.

The digging was slow and tedious. It seemed there was more sand than soil—the hardened ground had not been broken in years. But Betty felt determined to try, so she brought out a little folding chair and began shoveling. She had only dug for a short time before she realized that digging her little flowerbed would be a project that could take most of the summer to complete.

That was when the two young men in white shirts and dark ties approached.

“I’m a Jew,” she told them. “You’re wasting your time.”

The elders smiled and, noticing the difficulty she was having, asked if they could help her with her garden.

“No!” she said. “You’ll get dirty.”

They told her they didn’t mind.

“I mind,” she said.

But the young men insisted, so Betty told them that if they really wanted to help, they would have to change into some old work clothes. She had some in the house that would

do, she told them. The missionaries agreed, changed, and went to work. They dug up the sand and replaced it with a layer of gravel for drainage. They then mixed the sand with topsoil and peat moss. After that, they leveled the sand by the roadway and shoveled gravel into a wheelbarrow, dumping it out to make a little road for the mail lady to reach her mailbox.

Everything was done exactly as the woman would have done it herself.

“All this time, we talked,” she says. “How young and strong—not only in body and mind but in faith in their God! Their kindness and love of the Lord God was like a heavenly balm soothing my tired soul. Your Church certainly outdid its best when bringing up those two,” she said.

While they worked, they talked of prayer and of the Book of Mormon. It was then that Betty made what she called a “fair trade” with the missionaries. If they would be willing to memorize the 23rd Psalm, she would read the Book of Mormon.

“I read it all night,” she said, “slowly—until well after the sun came up. I’m marking in it now. Over one passage I wrote, ‘Great truth!’ Over another I wrote, ‘Beautiful!’ ”

Not long after this experience, Betty wrote an 18-page handwritten letter to the Church in Salt Lake City. She thanked the Church for sending two young elders to help her dig her garden. Looking back on this experience, she writes, “I am becoming more of a Mormonish Jew.”

One thing is certain. She will never forget the two young elders from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who rolled up their sleeves and picked up shovels and hoes and helped an elderly woman in a moment of need.

