

THE LAMP OF THE LORD

Situated on Main Street a block north of the tabernacle was Gasberg's lamp store. Although other items were sold, for many years the chief offering to the buying public had been kerosene lamps of every variety. Old Brother Gasberg had come over from the "old country," and a business tradition of long standing was not easy to let go of simply because the coming of electricity obviated a change.

Clem, whose own place of business was directly across the street from the Gasberg's had suggested to them on several occasions that they ought to reduce their lamp inventory and concentrate on other items.

"There's no use trying to ride a dead horse," he said. "Kerosene lamps will be as much a thing of the past as buggy whips in a few years."

But old Gasberg was unswerving in his devotion to the lamp, and insisted they would have their day again. "Folks are going to get hurt with this here electricity. Somebody's going to be blown to kingdom come and those that ain't too dumb will be buying lamps again. Every man ought to have a lamp in his home if only so he can burn it once in a while as a light unto the lord." After Brother Gasberg passed on to his reward, his wife still kept the lamps on the shelf trimmed and filled waiting for that day when they might be needed again, maybe for something special.

It was on a dark, wintry Sunday night some years later. The night session of Stake conference was being held in the tabernacle. There was neither moon nor star to light the world outside and the interior of the tabernacle was as dark as the inside of Jonah's whale when the power failed in the middle of the main sermon by the "Salt Lake visitor."

In spite of the enlightenment coming from the pulpit, the whole congregation was left in what must certainly have been, by degree, one shade this side of total darkness. Clem, who had been conducting the meeting, felt his way to the side of the speaker by the pulpit and asked everyone to sit quietly for a few moments until the lights came back on. But, after waiting several minutes, they hadn't come back on yet and it was clear the congregation was getting restless. Clem asked them to quiet down and suggested that the speaker continue with his sermon while he with the help of some others would see what could be done about the lights. "After all," he pointed out, "you hear just as well in the dark as you can in the light."

He and three others who had been sitting near him on the stand groped their way out of the tabernacle and walked in the direction of Clem's store a half a block farther down main street. He thought he remembered where there were a couple of barn lanterns and maybe they could think of something else.

As they reached the store he glanced across the street and noticed that although the lights were off in every other building, Sister Gasberg was enjoying the light of her kerosene lamps, not the least inconvenienced by the power failure. Suddenly the thought occurred to Clem that Gasberg's folly may have been foresight wisdom after all.

Sister Gasberg glowed like one of her lamps as she kept saying "I knew it would happen, I knew it." She loaded the lamps, twelve of them, into the arms of the four men and they hurried back to the tabernacle with the solution to the problem.

The tabernacle was a large rectangular, stone building with a tall steeple on the front end. And, except for its shape it was designed like the great tabernacle in Salt Lake City, with a balcony running all around the edge of the interior. The speaker paused momentarily while lamps were placed on either side of the pulpit and the other ten were positioned at proper intervals all around the railing of the balcony.

A soft semi-shaded light pervaded most of the building except under the balcony where some young couples were cuddled a little closer than would seem proper for such a setting and. under the normal glare of electric lighting.

The speaker continued with his sermon and the whole atmosphere was one of tranquility and spiritual repose. Some said it was the most inspiring session they had ever attended in that building. Clem looked over the entranced audience and gradually let his eyes focus on a small, bent figure standing at the foot of the steps leading down from the side of the pulpit to the main floor. There was Sister Gasberg in one of her rare appearances in Church, draped in a knit shawl, looking over the solemn scene and smiling like a toothless angel, guardian of the "Lamp of The Lord."