

**ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH, JR.**

Latter-day visions and revelations.—

The sublime doctrine of salvation for the dead.—Temple work an important part of God's great plan of salvation.

—Organization of genealogical societies inspired by the Lord.—Vicarious work for the dead a serious responsibility.

We have listened during the various sessions of this conference to the preaching of the gospel in power and plainness, in such a manner that it must appeal to the souls of all the Latter-day Saints. With you, my brethren and sisters, I have rejoiced in these principles which have been presented for our edification, and that we might be strengthened in the faith and live more nearly our religion which has been revealed to us from heaven in these latter days—the dispensation of the fulness of times. We have been taught faith in our Lord and Redeemer, and in the Father of us all; the necessity of repentance from sin; baptism by immersion for the remission of sin; and the reception of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of the hands of the Elders of Israel. We have been taught the doctrine of the atonement; the universal resurrection of the dead, and the exaltation of the righteous in the celestial kingdom of our Father. We have been instructed in our duties as members of the Church and as officers therein, by men holding authority, who have spoken as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and who have not spoken as the Scribes and Pharisees, for the words which have been uttered here have been true. It seems to me they should appeal not only to the Latter-day Saints, but to all the honest in heart who may hear them.

One of the things that is difficult

for me to understand is why men will harden their hearts, and close their eyes against the truth when it is spoken in such plainness and power, accompanied by the Spirit of the Lord. We know these things are true, and that Joseph Smith was called and sent into the world to establish again the kingdom of God in righteousness, that the gospel of repentance might be preached in all the world, among all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples, that those who believe and repent might come out of Babylon and be redeemed from their sins. I rejoice, as my brethren have rejoiced and as the Saints have rejoiced, in this knowledge of the truth.

There is one phase of this great subject of salvation that appeals to me, that I desire to speak of, briefly, this afternoon. It has already been alluded to in part. (It is our duty to save the world. That is our mission, in so far as they will listen unto us and receive our testimony. All those who reject the testimony of the Elders of Israel will be held responsible, and will have to give an accounting for their stewardship, just as we will give an accounting of our stewardship as Elders and teachers of the people.)

Early in the year 1836, after the completion of the Kirtland Temple, the leading brethren of the Church assembled from time to time in that building in solemn assembly, to be instructed in their duties and to learn the ways of the Lord. On these occasions preceding, at the time, and following the dedication of that house, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon them in power; the heavens were opened; many of them saw visions; angels appeared to them, and they were instructed. Principles were revealed

that had been kept hid from the world, and on one occasion, on the 21st day of January, while they were thus assembled, wonderful heavenly manifestations were given, and the Prophet tells us what he saw. Said he :

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel a second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of his sins. Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying—All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men, according to their works, according to the desires of their hearts. And I also beheld all children who die before they arrived at years of accountability, are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.

This was a glorious revelation of truth, not understood in the world previous to the receiving of this vision. And the Prophet saw that which was yet future, as well as what was already past, for he beheld his brother Alvin, who died before the gospel was restored; he saw his father and his mother taking part in the glory of the celestial kingdom, yet his brother Alvin had

not been baptized for the remission of his sins. The Lord says that we cannot enter there without baptism for the remission of our sins. Little children are redeemed, of course, for they are without sin and receive salvation through the atonement of Christ, which was made in their behalf as well as in behalf of all people. His father and mother were still living in the flesh, so he saw that which was yet future. Alvin died before he had the opportunity of receiving a remission of his sins. At the time of his fatal sickness the bringing forth of this work had merely commenced. He approved of it and encouraged his younger brother to continue in the labor which the Lord had given him to do; but he did not enter that celestial kingdom until after the gospel was restored to the earth in its fulness. And then the Lord taught the people, through His servant the Prophet, the means by which those who would have received the truth, but were denied the privilege, might receive it and enter into this kingdom. We who have received it have the right and the power, which has been delegated unto us, to go into the house of the Lord and there be baptized in behalf of our dead, that they also might receive salvation in common with us, and this was done for Alvin Smith. It has been done for thousands and tens of thousands of true, faithful souls who were denied the privilege of receiving the truth in the flesh, but afterwards received it and had a remission of their sins, after repenting of them, and received the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost by proxy, according to the vicarious work that the Lord has delegated unto us and commanded us to perform in behalf of the dead.

All who would have received the truth will enter into that kingdom, those who have lived in the ages past, when the gospel and the authority were not on the earth, as well as those who received it here. All, even down to the end of time, shall receive salvation who will repent of their sins and come unto the Lord with a desire to keep His commandments and serve Him and obey Him in all things. They are heirs of the celestial kingdom. Therefore, as we have heard this afternoon in the singing of the choir, the Lord has prepared the temples so that the Latter-day Saints can go to them, not only to receive ordinances in their own behalf, but that they might also perform these same ordinances in behalf of their dead, that they might be redeemed from their sins, for they cannot personally receive baptism and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost now, because those ordinances belong to this mortal life. They have passed into the life beyond, therefore it is necessary that some one perform this work for them by proxy. This is not strange. Some people scoff at the idea and say that it is impossible for one man to act in behalf of another, and yet they accept Christ as the Redeemer of the world and they say that He came into the world and took upon Him our sins, that we might be redeemed. He having power to do that for all of us, surely He has a right to say to us that we shall have power, in a lesser degree, to perform ordinances in behalf of others.) And so He has done.

Now, all who will listen to the truth and receive it shall become members of the Church of the First

Born, and shall enter into the celestial kingdom. Those who reject it after it has been preached to them will not have this privilege, as we have already heard at this conference. Children are redeemed because they are without sin. (Those who die without law will be redeemed, because they will be judged without law, but all who have received law and who have known the truth in a degree will be judged according to the truth that they have known, and if they have not lived up to that which they have known, or which they have been taught or had the privilege of receiving, then they cannot enter into this celestial kingdom. It is, however, our duty to save the world, the dead as well as the living. We are saving the living who will repent by preaching the gospel among the nations and gathering out the children of Israel, the honest in heart. We are saving the dead by going into the house of the Lord and performing these ceremonies—baptism, the laying on of hands, confirmation, and such other things as the Lord requires at our hands, in their behalf.) But we are going to save even those who reject the truth, those who have been blinded by the craftiness of men, those who have received the truth in part, for not all who have entered into the kingdom of God shall enter into the celestial kingdom, for they will be judged, each one according to his works. If we have not kept the law of that kingdom; if we have not been true to the covenants we have made with the Lord, then we will not receive the fulness of glory in His kingdom, and thus the scriptures tell us that those who are not admitted into the celestial kingdom, but into the ter-

restrial are those who died without law, and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.

These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who received of His glory but not of His fulness. These are they who received of the presence of the Son but not of the fulness of the Father, wherefore they are bodies terrestrial and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun."

Following this remarkable vision and revelation of truth in the Kirtland Temple just a little more than two months, other visions were received, they were the manifestations of holy messengers in that same house. Among them came Elijah the Prophet, who laid his hands upon the head of Joseph Smith and upon the head of Oliver Cowdery, his fellow servant, and conferred upon them the keys which he held of the turning of the hearts of the children to their fathers, and from that time forth the spirit of Elijah's work, the planting in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, was poured out upon the people. Not only the Latter-day Saints, but upon the honorable people of this land and of Great Britain and other nations of Europe. The Kirtland Temple was not a complete structure as we build Temples today. No provision was made in it for the salvation of the dead. When it was built this glorious gospel of salvation for the dead was not understood, but in that building these principles were revealed, and when the Lord called upon the people later to build an-

other temple to His name, he commanded them to build in it a baptismal font and make it a structure, where the salvation of those who had gone to the great beyond might be brought about. The font was prepared in it, and the people went into it and were baptized in behalf of their dead.

In the year 1844, the year of the martyrdom, a number of men met together in Boston, Massachusetts, and organized themselves into a society for the purpose of gathering up the records of the dead, filing them away and preserving them. The following year, 1845, their organization was incorporated, and is known today as the New England Historical and Genealogical Society. From this time the spirit spread among the people until to-day similar societies can be found in great numbers of the states of the American Union, in most of the countries of Great Britain, in some of the larger cities on the continent of Europe, in Scandinavia, in Germany, where the hearts of the children, since the restoration of those keys, have turned towards their parents. The people are searching among the records of the dead, gathering them out, compiling them, publishing them, and making it possible that the Latter-day Saints may obtain them, go to the house of the Lord and perform these ordinances—these saving principles in behalf of their dead.

This is a great responsibility that rests upon us, for the Prophet says it is the burden of the scriptures, and if we fail to do it in behalf of our dead we do it at the peril of our own salvation. We cannot be saved without them, and they cannot be saved without us, that is the faith-

ful, because there must be a welding, a joining together of the generations from the days of Adam to the end of time. Families will be joined and linked together, parents to children, children to parents, one generation to another, until we shall be joined together in one great grand family with our father Adam at the head, where the Lord placed him. So we cannot be saved and exalted in the kingdom of God unless we have within our hearts the desire to do this work and perform it so far as it is within our power on behalf of our dead. This is the responsibility and the duty that rests upon the Latter-day Saints, and the Lord will hold us responsible, and we will not be found guiltless of the blood of our generation and of our relatives who were true and faithful to the truth so far as they knew it, unless we do something in their behalf. This is a glorious doctrine, one of the grand principles of truth revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We should take advantage of our opportunities and prove ourselves worthy and acceptable in the sight of the Lord, that we might receive this exaltation for ourselves, and there rejoice in the kingdom of God with our relatives and friends in this grand reunion and assemblage of the Saints of the Church of the First Born, who have kept themselves free and unspotted from the sins of the world.)

The Lord bless us and grant that we may have the desire in our hearts to magnify our calling and to serve Him in faithfulness in all these things, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Brother David Rees, and the

choir, rendered the sacred song, "Hosannah."

### PRESIDENT SEYMOUR B. YOUNG

(Of First Council of Seventy.)

My brethren and sisters, Charles Dickens wrote, "If you would understand the feelings of your fellow man, try to put yourself in his place." I realize the responsibility resting upon the brethren who arise to speak to this vast congregation, and I can say today, of a truth, that I have been greatly edified and instructed by the remarks of my brethren during the sessions of this great conference. Nothing of greater interest has transpired during our meetings than the salient points expressed by each speaker on the subjects by them handled. The address on the life of the Pioneer, Orson Pratt, reminded the people of the labors of that great man, especially those who have been somewhat conversant with his life and history and his devout and unceasing toil for his fellow man. We were reminded of his charming personality, and of his devoted friendship to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance and friendship. This afternoon we have been interested very much in the subject of the temples of our God, and the work that has been done in these great edifices for the benefit of the living as well as the dead. In the dedication of the Kirtland Temple the Prophet Joseph gave utterance to this beautiful prayer, a portion of which I will read, found in the 109th section of the Book of Covenants:

Thanks be to Thy name, O Lord God of Israel, who keepeth covenant