

## ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY

## IN TUNE WITH THE KEYNOTE.

My spirit is in perfect tune with the keynote struck for this conference. I believe in charity and forgiveness. I fully agree with the one who said: "He that judgeth a matter before he heareth it is not wise." And we do not hear a matter by hearing one side of it. It is wrong to pass judgment before proof of guilt. The Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered while awaiting trial on a trumped up charge of which he had not been proved guilty, nor could he have been. He had surrendered for trial, but his plotting murderers declared: "The law cannot reach him, but powder and ball shall." And they forthwith carried out their wicked threat. This, however, is not the theme that was weighing upon my mind.

## TWO PHASES OF GOD'S WORK.

I have been thinking of two great phases of the Lord's Latter-day work, one of them appealing more strongly, perhaps, to the traveling ministry who are preaching the gospel in the world; the other to those who are laboring at home in the Stakes of Zion and particularly in the temples of God.

## TEMPLES IN THIS DISPENSATION

Temples and temple work is a subject that lies very near and is very dear to the heart of every faithful, thoughtful Latter-day Saint. This Church since its organization, has built eight temples—the first one at Kirtland, Ohio, in the year 1836; the next one at Nauvoo, Illinois, in the early forties; and it projected others at Independence, Missouri, and at Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman in that state. Then came the departure of the Saints into the wilderness. The first temple in Utah, the one at St. George, was dedicated in 1877, the year that President Brigham Young died. Next in order was the Logan Temple, completed in 1884; then the Manti Temple, in 1888. The great Salt Lake Temple, which occupied forty years in building and cost over three million dollars, was dedicated in April, 1893. Since that time, we have built a temple in the Hawaiian Islands, and another at Cardston, in the province of Alberta, Canada. And now the Church contemplates a temple at Mesa, Arizona, which will make the ninth, thus far, in this dispensation.

## THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE

Among all these sacred structures there is one that stands out unique, with a character and history all its own. It is not the largest

of our temples, nor the costliest; but things occurred within its walls of which there is no counterpart in the history of any other house of God. I refer to the temple at Kirtland, which it was my privilege to visit, first, in 1877, and subsequently in 1914. One peculiarity of that temple—which yet stands—is the absence of a baptismal font, the principle of baptism for the dead not having been revealed to the Church that early. But there is something connected with the Kirtland Temple of far greater consequence than a baptismal font, and without which there would have been no baptismal font in any of the temples since erected; and without which, moreover, the whole work of God in this dispensation would have come to a standstill.

#### JOSEPH AND OLIVER

You will understand me more clearly after I have read to you a selection from the book of Doctrine and Covenants—a portion of Section 110, the caption of which runs as follows: "Visions manifested to Joseph the Seer and Oliver Cowdery, in the Kirtland Temple, April 3rd, 1836." This was just one week after that house had been dedicated. Joseph and Oliver were the first and second Elders of the Church. They had been associated together in the translating of the Book of Mormon. They were together when John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood, and when the Melchizedek Priesthood was brought back to earth by Peter, James and John. They were together in organizing the Church; and now, six years after that event, they are together in the first temple erected by the Latter-day Saints, receiving from God one of the most wonderful manifestations ever vouchsafed to mortals. It came in order that what had gone before in the opening of this gospel dispensation, might not be in vain. The glorious appearing of the Father and the Son; the visitations of the Angel Moroni; the discovery of the Nephite plates; the restoration of the Priesthood, and the organization of the Church—all these events were preliminary to what was about to come. Here is the record of visions seen by Joseph and Oliver on that occasion:

#### JEHOVAH APPEARS

The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

We saw the Lord standing upon the breast-work of the pulpit, before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, the hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying—

I am the first and the last, I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain, I am your advocate with the Father.

A wonderful revelation in itself, this proclamation from the mouth of Jehovah, the God of Israel, that he is no other than Jesus

Christ, the Savior of mankind. He accepts the house—the Temple built to his name—and the record thus continues:

#### MOSES AND ELIJAH

After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. . . .

After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the Prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us and said—

Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come,

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.

Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

#### THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS

Up to this time the activities of the Elders who were preaching the gospel had been confined to various states of the Union and to the Dominion of Canada; but now the Ensign, previously lifted, was farther advanced. The keys of the gathering having been restored, preparations were made for sending the gospel from the Land of Zion into foreign lands, calling in from their long dispersion the children of Israel, scattered for generations through the various nations of the world. But if the keys committed by Moses, who held them at the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, had not been conferred upon the Prophet presiding over this dispensation, the work of God would have halted then and there. There would have been no gathering of Israel, if the keys for the gathering had not been restored.

#### FIRST FOREIGN MISSION

In the summer of 1837, a little over a year after these keys were given to Joseph and Oliver, the Prophet, harassed and tortured by conditions then prevailing at Kirtland, where everything seemed tottering to its fall—half the Quorum of the Twelve and many of the Seventies and Elders arraying themselves against the Lord's anointed—voiced the word of God to the effect that "something new must be done to save the Church." Yes, Satan saw what was coming; he knew the significance of the restoration of those sacred keys, and he did his utmost to destroy the Lord's work in its infancy. It was a period of apostasy; the things of the world were uppermost in the minds of the people, and many were neglecting their spiritual duties, and seeking to become rich at the sacrifice of principle. Such was the situation when, according to Heber C. Kimball, one of the Apostles,

the Prophet, sitting beside him in the Kirtland Temple, Sunday, June 4, 1837, said: "Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me, 'Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my gospel and open the door of salvation to that nation.'" Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde, with Willard Richards, Joseph Fielding, Isaac Russell, John Goodson and John Snyder, crossed the Atlantic, landed at Liverpool penniless, proceeded to Preston in Lancashire, and there preached the first "Mormon" sermons ever heard on European soil. Their success was marvelous. Whole villages were swept into the Church by these unlettered but divinely empowered apostles of the new dispensation. In eight months they baptized two thousand souls, and Heber wrote back to Kirtland: "Glory to God, Joseph, the Lord is with us among the nations!"

#### EARLIEST IMMIGRANTS

Subsequently another apostolic mission, headed by Brigham Young and including a majority of the Twelve, crossed the ocean and carried the gospel to all parts of the British Isles. Five thousand converts were added to the Church; a new edition of the Book of Mormon was published; many thousands of tracts were distributed; the *Millennial Star* was founded; a permanent emigration agency established; and in the month of June, 1840, the first company of Latter-day Saints from a foreign land sailed from Liverpool to New York, bound for Nauvoo, Illinois, which had become the place of gathering. From that time on, Israel has been flocking from the nations, to meet the God of Israel when he comes, and to make the necessary preparation for his coming. All this by virtue of the keys restored by Moses, and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple.

#### JUDAH TO RETURN

About two months before that little company of forty-one Saints crossed the Atlantic on the ship *Britannia*, a notable conference was held at Nauvoo, and two of the Apostles, Orson Hyde and John E. Page, were called to go to Palestine and bless that land, that its barrenness might depart and the way be opened for the restoration of the Jews. For be it remembered that the gathering of Israel includes the assembling of "the dispersed of Judah"—their return to their ancient homeland. America is the Land of Zion, and here the New Jerusalem will stand. But Christ's kingdom will have two capitals, one in the Old World; one in the New; "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

#### ORSON HYDE IN PALESTINE

John E. Page faltered and fell by the way; but Orson Hyde accomplished his mission, though beset and hindered by many hard-

ships and difficulties. It took him a year and a half to reach the goal for which he had set out. Finally, on the 24th day of October, 1841, from the summit of the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem, he offered to Jehovah, the God of Israel, a most fervent and eloquent prayer in behalf of his covenant people. He blessed the sterile land by the power of the holy apostleship, that it might become fruitful once more, and that Judah might repossess his ancient heritage. Afterwards he predicted that the British nation would take an active part in the redemption of Palestine; a prophecy fulfilled at the close of the recent World War, when General Allenby, at the head of a British army, made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

#### LATER MISSIONS TO THE HOLY LAND

In the year 1872 a mission went from Salt Lake City to the Holy Land. President George A. Smith headed the party, which also included Lorenzo Snow, one of the Twelve Apostles, and his gifted sister, the poet, Eliza R. Snow. Upon reaching Palestine, President Smith duplicated the work done by Orson Hyde in 1841, dedicating the land for the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Other elders of the Church have since visited that once favored and yet to be glorified region. President Anthon H. Lund was there in 1898; and he likewise offered up an earnest prayer for the great consummation. All this because Moses restored the keys for the gathering of Israel in this dispensation.

#### THE KEYS OF ELIJAH

But what about the keys of Elijah? What is their significance? If you will read Sections 127 and 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and peruse pages 27 to 35 of "Joseph Smith's Teachings," you will learn what the founder of this Church had in mind relative to that important matter. In connection with the building of temples and the work done in them by the living for the dead, we have from his pen this glorious utterance: "It is necessary, in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, . . . that a whole and complete and perfect union and welding together of dispensations and keys and powers and glories should take place and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time; and not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this the dispensation of the fulness of times."

#### A GREATER GATHERING

In other words, there is to be another gathering, one still greater than the gathering of the dispersed house of Israel. It is the gath-

ering or bringing together of the gospel dispensations, and the binding of all into one. This is called the dispensation of the fulness of times, and its peculiar distinguishing characteristic is, that it folds to its mighty bosom all the dispensations preceding it; the angels holding the keys of the past conferring them upon the Prophet who presides over this period or division of God's work, to the end that oneness and unity may be established as a condition precedent to the Savior's Millennial reign. Therefore came Moses and Elijah, John the Baptist, Peter, James and John and others, bringing and bestowing their keys, so that their work might be blended with the work done in this dispensation, which is destined to gather together all things that are Christ's, both in heaven and on earth. Especially was it necessary that Elijah should restore the keys of his calling and ministry—keys comprising the revelation of "the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood," with all its "ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments," the seals of which must be placed upon the House of Israel, that all may be made ready for Messiah's advent.

#### THE WELDING LINK

The Prophet says that there must be "a welding link between the fathers and the children"—the fathers in heaven yearning over their children on earth; and therefore was Elijah sent. His keys empower the living to do saving work for the dead and seal them up to come forth in the first resurrection; "to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven." "For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect." "This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah." The welding link is baptism for the dead, with other vicarious work now going on in the temples that God's people have erected. You brethren and sisters who labor in these temples may cherish in your souls the sweet conviction that you are helping to bind together the gospel dispensations and assisting to advance the mighty purposes of God.

#### THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

"Mormonism," as it is called, did not originate in the nineteenth century. It is not of any one time nor of any one place. It is the everlasting gospel, the same yesterday, today and forever. There never has been and never will be another gospel; but this one, framed in heaven, has been upon earth again and again, in a series of dispensations reaching like a mighty chain from the morning of creation down to the end of time. And all these dispensations must be linked and bound together before the God of Israel appears; for unless a condition of unity and power, resulting from faith and righteous works, exists at that time, the whole earth will be smitten with a curse. Not that the Lord wishes to curse, but rather to bless mankind. But the blessing that he desires to bestow at his coming would change into a consuming curse, if the necessary preparation were not made.

## PERFECTION THE GOAL

The gospel is the plan of eternal progression, and perfection is its goal. Apart from our ancestors who figured in the former dispensations, neither we nor they can attain perfection. But by unity, which brings power, and by faith, which makes all things possible, the glorious end can be achieved. The sacred ordinances of God's House—baptisms, endowments, sealings, adoptions, etc.,—all point to a perfect state of righteous love and unity. Why, for instance, do we marry for eternity, and not merely for time? It is because we are children of eternity, building for eternity, and "the man is not without the woman nor the woman without the man, in the Lord." Together they represent completeness, perfection; separated, they symbolize incompleteness, imperfection; and nothing imperfect can enter into the Divine Presence. Let a man and a woman, single or married only for time, present themselves at the celestial gates, and it will be said to them, or of them, as it was said at the gates of Verdun: "They shall not pass." But they who are wedded for eternity, wedded according to God's law and by his sealing power and authority, shall pass by the angels and the gods and inherit a fulness of joy. The welding link must bind together husband and wife, parent and child, present and past, living and dead—"all things in Christ," to the end that there may be completeness, perfection, and that that condition of unity and love may prevail which is the required preparation for the coming of the Lord in his glory. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn, "High on the mountain top."

Benediction was offered by Elder Daniel G. Miller, President of the Yellowstone Stake of Zion.

Conference adjourned until Saturday morning at 10 a. m.

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## SECOND DAY.

Conference convened in the tabernacle, Saturday morning, October 9, 1920, at 10 o'clock.

The congregation was called to order by President Heber J. Grant, who presided.

The choir and congregation sang, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet."

Opening prayer was offered by Elder Orville H. Budge, President of the Logan Stake of Zion.

The choir and congregation sang, "O ye mountains high."