

is his Church, that it is not founded upon Peter or Paul or Joseph or Heber, or any other human being, but only upon the power and authority of the living God, and upon the solid rock of revelation from Almighty God. Amen.

### PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

Certainly Zion is growing. I hope some time we will be able to have an auditorium that will hold all who would like to attend our meetings.

We have learned that the majority of the people prefer to hear the sermons that are preached in this building on Sundays, rather than attend overflow meetings. For that reason we have discontinued the meetings in the Assembly Hall, and are giving the people who can not get into the tabernacle the privilege of sitting in the Assembly Hall and other places and listening to the singing by the Tabernacle Choir and the remarks that are made from this stand, as they are broadcast over the radio.

### ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

*"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"*

This question was put by Paul to King Agrippa when the Apostle stood a prisoner in bonds because of his testimony of Christ, about thirty years after our Lord's resurrection. At that time the Saints were persecuted on account of their persistent testimony of the Christ, crucified and risen. The powerful Sadducees of that day condemned the doctrine of a resurrection; the Pharisees professed vague concepts of resurrection of or from the dead, in the sense of there being some awakening of the Spirit that had been asleep; but only those who had accepted the testimony of the Christ believed in the absolute and literal resurrection.

#### TRUTH NOT CONDITIONED BY HUMAN COMPREHENSION

This day is observed throughout Christendom in commemoration of the greatest event of history—the coming forth of the crucified body of the Christ as the tabernacle of his immortal spirit, he a resurrected soul, the first man to thus rise from death to immortality upon this earth, "the first fruits of them that slept," "the first-born of the dead." In this day of higher criticism, of skepticism and doubt, there are many of the learned and wise—learned and wise in their own estimation and that of their fellows—who proclaim the impossibility of any process of resurrection. Are not such men seeking to limit the power of God and to make him a falsifier?

Can there be nothing but what we are able to understand and explain as to means, mode, and accomplishment? This would be a poverty-stricken world if it knew nothing but what man can explain and ex-

pound. Shall it be that because we cannot do a thing, we shall say it cannot be done, even by a higher power? The resurrection of Christ had been foretold; the predictions concerning his coming forth were literally and actually realized. Even those who were nearest unto him were unable to comprehend his own prophecies concerning his resurrection, and at first doubted the fulfilment. After he had come forth from the tomb there were some of the disciples, aye, even of the Apostles, who treated the report as an idle tale. They could not comprehend that which had never been known to have taken place before. They lacked analogy, they had nothing with which to compare the unprecedented event, and resurrection to them meant much as it meant to the Pharisees.

#### AT THE TOMB—AS PREDICTED

On that Sunday morn, the third day after the body of the Christ had been laid away in the rock-hewn tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Mary, the devoted woman of Magdala, and other women, had gone to the sepulcher to give tender ministry by external embalmment of the Lord's body. On the way they questioned how they would gain entrance to the tomb; as to who would roll away the great stone that sealed the entrance to the sepulcher. When they arrived they were astonished and affrighted, for notwithstanding the imperial seal of Caesar that had been placed on the portal, in spite of the guard of soldiery, the tomb was open. There sat upon the stone an angelic being, glorious in appearance. He spoke to comfort them, but they were terrified; yet the angel said: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.

They carried back the gladsome glorious word that the tomb no longer held the body of their Master; but the disciples could not understand, notwithstanding the fact that the Lord had predicted to them, and that but a few days before—the last of many declarations of the sort—that he would be slain, and that on the third day he would rise again. "Let these sayings sink down into your ears," he had said unto them of slow understanding and of seeming unbelief, as he told again of his impending death, with which on other occasions he coupled assurances of his rising from the dead; yet they questioned among themselves as to what he could mean by rising from the dead.

#### ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

The events followed one another in rapid succession on that most memorable Sunday in all history. You know the record of the two disciples, not of the Apostles, Cleopas and a companion, who were wending their way along the country road, leading to Emmaus; how another Traveler joined them; how their eyes were holden so that they recognized him not; how he questioned them, not to gain information for himself but to give them opportunity, as every true teacher gives

his pupils a chance, to express themselves. He asked them what was the subject of their solemn conversation, and they voiced their surprise that he, even if he were a stranger in Jerusalem, had not heard of the great events of the preceding few days. They told their story; then he expounded unto them the scriptures, even from the first, showing that it was necessary that Christ should suffer death, and that he was surely to come forth from the tomb, as the prophets had foretold—and yet the wayfarers recognized him not. Not until they were seated at table in the little cottage in Emmaus, not until the honored Guest whom they had invited to tarry with them broke the bread and blessed it, did they know him. We are not told whether perchance they caught sight of the nail-prints in his hands, or whether they were moved by remembrance of other similar blessings, voiced by him and heard by them before, or by what circumstance it was, but they knew him, and he vanished from their sight.

#### MANIFESTATIONS TO THE DISCIPLES

The two men hastened back to Jerusalem, where ten of the Apostles and other disciples had assembled, locked in, by way of precaution against possible intrusion by some of the many enemies who were seeking their lives. They told their story to the newly arrived disciples. He is risen! He has appeared unto Simon, they declared; and while the little company talked and rejoiced together the Lord stood there amongst them, and they were sorely frightened. They had talked of his having been resurrected, of his having come back to life, and yet they were afraid. They thought they saw a ghost! He calmed their fears. "Peace be unto you. \* \* \* Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And yet they could scarcely believe for the joy of it! The demonstrated fact seemed to them too good to be true. To make plain that he was a corporeal being in the sense of having a tangible body, no mere outward shape or semblance only, he asked if they had anything to eat, and they brought honey and other food to him and he did eat before them, demonstrating that his body was complete, with internal organs as well as external parts.

Can a resurrected being eat food of earth? A resurrected being can function upon any lower plane. A resurrected personage can do anything that a mortal personage can do, and much besides.

One of the eleven, Thomas, was absent; and when they told him what had taken place he could not believe. He was yet skeptical. Don't blame him. We know not what tradition was doing in his mind. We may not know the limitations of his powers of understanding, but he was very much like some people of this day. "I can't believe it," he said in effect, "not until I can see, not until I can feel his hands and his feet—I shall have to examine those wounds and thrust my finger into his side before I can believe." After eight days, that is to say, a week later, the next Sunday, which day of the week thenceforth became the Sabbath, the Lord's day, Christ appeared unto them again and

Thomas was there. It was an affecting occasion: Thomas, come, see and feel! Thomas, convinced, bowed in worship, exclaiming only: "My Lord and my God." "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

#### IN THE REALM OF THE DEAD

Through the ministration of the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of light and truth, Christ had predicted what he would do while his body lay in the tomb; read for yourselves those scriptures. But a short time before the crucifixion he had said unto the people: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. \* \* Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." A reiteration of the sublime principles comprised in that scripture has been made in this modern day, and the two resurrections are spoken of by the voice of the Lord to Joseph Smith as the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. Furthermore it hath been declared that all who have breathed the air of earth, all who have tabernacled in bodies composed of the elements of this planet, shall be resurrected. The separation of spirit from body is but temporary.

#### LUCIFER'S DESIGN FOILED

You know the great plan that was laid in the councils of heaven before the earth was framed, that men should be sent upon the earth, that is, the spirits of men, to take upon themselves bodies. Lucifer, a son of the morning, and his followers, comprising a third of the spirit-hosts, had opposed the plan that the Father had proposed, and he and his followers, Lucifer and his angels, were cast out upon the earth, and straightway they sought to nullify the Father's decree and to destroy those bodies into which the preexistent spirits would enter to work out their mortal probation. Lucifer, known upon earth as Satan, gained a temporary triumph; he succeeded in bringing death into the world, and doubtless there was rejoicing amongst his demon subjects. What would become of the great plan of giving those spirits bodies upon the earth when death had come in and had forced a separation of spirit and body, and had brought the body to decay, resolving it into its elements? What now would be accomplished by the decision of the council in carrying out the plan of the Father?

#### CHRIST'S ATTRIBUTES—HUMAN AND DIVINE

Separation of spirit and body was foreseen and provided for, for in due time came the Only Begotten Son of the Father, the only being who has ever walked the earth, from Adam down, not the child of two mortal parents, father and mother. Christ, the Son of a mortal woman

but not begotten by a mortal father, combined within himself the powers of Godship and the attributes of mortality. How else can we explain his own declaration that he had life in himself? Consider his words as part of that sublime sermon on the shepherd and the sheep, in which he made plain that he was the good shepherd and the only true shepherd of the Lord's flock. He said unto the people: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;" and he added this comment regarding his power, capacity, and ability: "This commandment have I received of my Father"—by which we may understand that from his Father he had derived, by heredity, the power to rise from mortality to immortality.

He could have said: "From my mother I have inherited the power to die, for she was a mortal woman; and from my Father, who was no mortal man, I have received this power to hold death in abeyance. I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it up again. No man can kill me until I am ready, not until my hour shall come and I shall give up my life. I am here for that foreordained purpose, as a consummation of this part of my work." He followed his work to the end. We read that when he was able to utter those words of triumph—and they must have been words of exultation to him: "It is finished," that he "gave up the ghost."

Oh yes, they killed him, that is, they killed him from their point of view, but not until he had finished his work did he relinquish his life. While he lived among men, he was preeminently the Man among men. So during his period of disembodiment he was preeminently the Spirit among spirits in the realm of the disembodied. To them he went and opened the work of preaching amongst the spirits who had lived in bodies upon the earth, men and women who had died.

#### ACTUALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was absolutely literal. He took up that body from the tomb as it had been laid down, for it had been predicted that he should not see corruption. The body bore all the marks of the crucifiers. So shall the resurrection of everyone be literal in this sense—that although these bodies go to decay, by the power of God shall all their essential parts be brought together again. When we stand before the bar of God we shall stand with spirit and body reunited, inseparably connected, and it is through the union of spirit and body, inseparably united, that a fulness of joy is made possible.

Such is the Lord's plan to bring about the immortality and the eternal life of man. Immediately following, or soon after the resurrection of Christ, many of the righteous dead came forth from their graves and were seen by mortals; other resurrections have followed, according to the appointed order in the resurrection of the just. Christ came thus and robbed the grave of its victory, assuring the eventual resurrection of all the sons and daughters of God who have tabernacled here upon the earth.

Let us rejoice on this Easter day, commemorative of the coming forth of the Christ from the tomb. It falls this year very close to the actual anniversary.

Easter, as you know, is a movable feast, fixed by decree of the Catholic Church. But this year it falls very close to the actual day on which the Christ came forth from the tomb. We have great reason to rejoice in the glorious blessing of the resurrection that is assured unto us. We should know further that during the period of our disembodiment we are not to be inactive. We have to follow up the work of the Lord among the disembodied, even as we are commissioned to do his work here upon the earth. Death is no overwhelming change by which the spirit loses its power of thought, or other of its God-given attributes. The spirit retains such and is active in the world of spirits, and will so exist and function until the time for the reunion with the body, and when the work reserved for that stage of human progress will be taken up.

#### MAN IS OF ETERNAL NATURE

Great is the plan of God with respect to his children, extending through the eternity that lies beyond. Right thankful should we be for the knowledge that has been given to us through revelation. Man could never have attained to a knowledge of these glorious truths by his own reasoning, by deduction or original conception. There are truths that man cannot find out; they have to be given unto him, cardinal, basal truths, and this is one of them. Forget not that we are eternal! We had an existence before we were born. In that existence you were you and I was I before our spirits entered into these bodies. You will be you and I shall be I after the change called death befalls us. We shall maintain our identity, or it shall be preserved unto us, through and beyond the resurrection; for we are eternal! How could it be otherwise, when we are the children of the Eternal One? Let us rejoice in this knowledge, which surpasses the wisdom of men, and shape our lives accordingly. To this end I humbly pray, in the name of the Resurrected Lord. Amen.

The choir sang two verses of the hymn, "Jesus once of humble birth."

A duet, "An angel from on high," was sung by Laurinda P. Brewerton and Donna Cox Gunderson, the choir and congregation joining in the chorus.

#### AN ANGEL FROM ON HIGH

An angel from on high,  
 The long, long silence broke;  
 Descending from the sky,  
 These gracious words he spoke:  
 Lo! in Cumorah's lonely hill,  
 A sacred record lies concealed.

Sealed by Moroni's hand,  
 It has for ages lain,  
 To wait the Lord's command,  
 From dust to speak again.  
 It shall again to light come forth,  
 To usher in Christ's reign on earth.

It speaks of Joseph's seed,  
 And makes the remnant known  
 Of nations long since dead,  
 Who once had dwelt alone.  
 The fulness of the Gospel, too,  
 Its pages will reveal to view.

The time is now fulfilled,  
 The long expected day;  
 Let earth obedience yield,  
 And darkness flee away;  
 Remove the seals, be wide unfurled  
 Its light and glory to the world.

Lo, Israel filled with joy,  
 Shall now be gathered home,  
 Their wealth and power employ  
 To build Jerusalem;  
 While Zion shall arise and shine;  
 And fill the earth with truth divine.

#### PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

If Parley P. Pratt had written nothing else but this hymn to which we have just listened, it would have immortalized him. He has, however, written more of the inspired hymns that are in our hymn book than any other of our writers.

#### ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN

*Of the First Council of Seventy and President of the California Mission*

I feel very highly honored, my brethren and sisters, in being accorded this privilege. It is marvelous to me that I should be permitted to stand before you. I feel in my soul that it is good to be here on this occasion, and I most fervently thank the Lord that the teachings that have been imparted to us in this session of our conference find lodgment in my soul, and fill me with that joy that passeth understanding.

I will read a word or two from the revelations of the Lord that I think very important in connection with the great work in which we are engaged. I suppose it is but reasonable that, as a missionary, my own mind should reflect upon matters pertaining to the preaching of the