

always told my own family, the people of the Rigby stake over whom I have the honor to preside, and others with whom I have come in contact, that the great thing for us to learn as Latter-day Saints, particularly the young men and the young women, is to find out God, the Eternal Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and to know something about this great latter-day work; that if they would only inform themselves along these lines they would always have joy and satisfaction in meeting the public in any land, and discussing with them the beauties of this great and glorious plan that has been entrusted to our care as Latter-day Saints.

My brethren and sisters, I am in strict harmony with those who preside over this Church. I know that they are men of God. The Lord will inspire them as long as they hold these positions, to direct the affairs of this people in the manner in which they should be directed. I am happy to have their confidence. I rejoice in being able to associate with them, and especially when they come to the Rigby stake to have the privilege of entertaining them. They always bring with them a splendid spirit, and when they leave we are all better for their coming.

I testify to you, my brethren and sisters, that God the Eternal Father lives, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, and that these men who surround me here are inspired of God, and are the living oracles. May God help us to understand and know these things, and to maintain them all the time, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, a speaker who stands before a congregation of this character very well understands that he is under a great burden of responsibility and is expected to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. If he should advance false doctrine it would be immediately detected by those who preside in the conference, and I think likely it would be detected by a congregation of Latter-day Saints. No man can long deceive the Latter-day Saints. This, I apprehend, is because the Spirit of God rests upon them, and they are able to distinguish between truth and error. I have attended many conferences in this building, and have never yet heard a false doctrine advanced from this pulpit. I take some pleasure in bearing this testimony.

PAST AND PRESENT LINKED TOGETHER

I have reflected much upon conditions that exist. I think I am safe in saying, my brethren and sisters, that the past and the present are connected by a chain of divine historical events, and also of historical, secular events—a chain that cannot be broken. This might be demonstrated by many incidents. Let me refer to one or two.

THE GOSPEL—INDIVISIBLE AND EVERLASTING

There is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel was preached in the beginning, it is preached to the world at the present time, it will be declared to future generations. The teachings of the Gospel exert a profound influence upon the world. The Gospel is a code of principles which are declared to be principles of salvation to those who will receive and obey them. The Gospel is complete in itself. Nothing is to be added to it. Nothing may be subtracted from it. The Gospel cannot be divided up into sectional parts, and if it were these sectional parts could not be safely treated separately. The Gospel must be taken as a whole. It is everlasting in its nature. It existed before, it exists now, and it will exist hereafter.

AN INCIDENT FROM THE DISTANT PAST

Let me draw your attention briefly for a moment to another incident, taken from the distant past. Let us go back to the Garden of Eden, which is sometimes designated as the beginning. When Adam, who is referred to by divine revelation as the first man, as "the ancient of days," as the father of the human family,—when he partook of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, mortality and death were introduced into the world, which has profoundly influenced the children of men from that distant day to the present time and will influence the world of men to the very end of time. Thus the past is connected with the present and will also have a direct bearing upon the future.

A DREADFUL DAY

Perhaps I may be pardoned if I particularize just a little further. One hears a voice coming out of the past. It is the voice of a humble servant of God, a prophet, and the words that issued from his mouth were also recorded in sacred writ and took the form of a prophecy which, if it shall be fulfilled, will influence the world of men very greatly. The prophet said: "A day is coming, a dreadful day will come upon the world." I fancy I hear some one say: "A dreadful day, Brother Clawson? We have had many dreadful days." Yes, we have had many dreadful days, when news came of earthquakes, destruction by fire and smoke, and waves of the ocean heaving themselves beyond their bounds, also cyclones and hurricanes sweeping over the earth. Yes, brother, these were dreadful days, but this particular day referred to by the prophet is somewhat different. It presents rather a different view. This day is called the "great and dreadful day of the Lord,"—quite different from these other days. And then we are told in a prophecy that before the great and dreadful day of the Lord shall come there must occur a very important circumstance, and it surely must precede the dreadful day of the Lord. Let us read the words of the prophecy, which is found in Malachi, the fourth chapter:

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

DESTRUCTION OF WICKED

That is a dreadful day, and yet in connection with it, and somewhat related to it, is shown forth the mercy of God, for the record says:

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

"And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

It would seem from this that the wicked are to be destroyed absolutely, root and branch, because of their wickedness, of which they will not repent, and hence a just judgment comes upon them.

"Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."

MARVELOUS MANIFESTATIONS

Now comes a very singular and wonderful part of this great prophecy that was uttered in the long distant past:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

That is the prophecy, brethren and sisters, and I doubt not that it is greatly misunderstood by the people of the world generally. It is quite easily comprehended by the people of the Latter-day Saints, because, as a matter of fact, this great prophecy has been fulfilled, fulfilled in the present age. I refer you to our Doctrine and Covenants, section 110, relating to certain visions and manifestation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. Those were very remarkable visions; nothing quite like them in this age of the world; nothing quite like them in any other age, except the manifestation given to Paul, the apostle, when he was caught up into heaven and beheld unutterable things.

In this manifestation the Savior appeared and stood upon the pulpit of the temple, and spoke to his servant, the Prophet, and to Oliver Cowdery, expressing his approval of the work that had been done in the building of that temple, and referring to the blessings that would result therefrom. Other glorious manifestations were given.

THE COMING OF ELIJAH

Finally, it was also said in section 110:

"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."

So this important prophecy, that comes out of the past, has been fulfilled in the present, and in a manner connecting the past with the present. We cannot, my brethren and sisters, as a people, neither can the children of men, separate and detach absolutely the past from the present.

THE WORD "TURN"

Now, in respect to this word "turn," we do not understand that that means that the fathers should simply assume a sympathetic attitude toward their children, that the children should have a sympathetic attitude toward their fathers, their fathers being dead. It means, if we may rely upon the word of the latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith, that the word "turn" should be translated "bind or seal," and if that be the case what a flood of light is thrown upon this important matter! It signifies that a work must be done for the dead and that we are to manifest our faith in the Gospel and in the prediction that has been made, by our work. Perhaps I might read a word or two from the history of the Church by the Prophet:

"Now the word 'turn' here should be translated 'bind or seal'. But what is the object of this important mission, or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered; the spirit of Elijah is to come; the Gospel to be established; the Saints of God gathered; Zion built up; and the Saints to come up as saviors upon Mount Zion. But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers, upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them, that they might come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them, and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, which fulfils the mission of Elijah."

WORK FOR THE DEAD

Possibly some one will say: "Well, are we really required then to do work for the dead?" Yes, surely to do a great work. Is that not indicated in the scriptures, that a work should be done for the dead, when the Apostle Paul said: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" So you see that Paul, the Apostle, understood this principle of baptism for the dead.

BY PROXY

The question will naturally arise: "Well, how is it possible for one to stand for another in respect to this matter, one on the earth being baptized for one who is dead? It is done through the principle of proxy, a principle which is well established in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He, himself, the Savior of the world, stood as proxy for the children of men, as set forth by the great principle of atonement. This work for the dead is to be done in a temple and, I may here say that wherever the people of God are to be found upon the earth, you will

find a temple-building people, and even now we are sitting under the eaves, as it were, of the temple of God—the temple, doubtless, that Isaiah saw in vision—the mountain of the Lord's house that was to be established in the tops of the mountains. I believe that the temple seen by Isaiah is the temple that stands adjacent to the tabernacle in which we are now assembled, and let me add we have other temples, some six in number.

THE CONNECTING LINK

We are permitted, under the gracious mercy of the Lord, my brethren and sisters, to go into these temples if we are worthy, and to do a work for the dead. We should be wide awake to the importance of this matter, because we are told that they, the dead, without us cannot be made perfect, and that we without our dead cannot be made perfect. Temple work is the link that connects us with our progenitors in the spirit world. Will the Gospel be preached to them? Surely it will be preached in the spirit world to them who had not the privilege of hearing it in this world. We are told in the epistle of Peter:

“For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they may be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Oh, the beauty of the justice and mercy of God, who is no respecter of persons! And let it be remembered that what it takes to save one who is living, it takes just that much to save one who is dead. Therefore, brethren and sisters, look well to this matter, and let your hearts be turned toward the dead, and avail yourselves of the opportunity of sealing them to the living.

May the Lord bless us. May the Lord bestow upon us the spirit, the desire and the determination to hunt up and secure a record of our forefathers, and then to go forth and perform this important labor in their behalf.

I know that this is the Church of God. I testify to you in all solemnity that I do know that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith was and is a true prophet of God.

The great truth that I have emphasized here today came through this modern prophet, and surely there were few greater prophets than he. God's blessings I invoke upon you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The congregation arose and sang the first two verses of the hymn, “Do what is right.”

ELDER ELIAS S. WOODRUFF

President of the Western States Mission

The opening song of the conference was “We thank thee, O God, for a prophet.” President Grant said in his opening remarks that when he sang that song he thought of the Prophet Joseph Smith.