

Monday, April 5

Third Day

that this restoration of the gospel was to be effected by angelic ministrations, and that the gospel so restored was then to be carried to all the peoples of the earth?

Where is there a people that believes that in a day subsequent to New Testament times, the kingdom was to be restored to Israel and the scattered remnants of that people gathered back to the lands of their inheritance?

Where is there a people that actually believes that signs will follow those who accept and obey the gospel law, that professes to have among the membership of the church the working of miracles, the ministering of angels, the gifts of the Spirit, and all of the powers and graces that were had anciently?

Now we might multiply questions on all of these matters, but I submit to you that every essential, identifying characteristic of the New Testament Church can, with intelligence and propriety, be outlined under one of these six heads: name, authority, ordinances, organization, doctrines, and gifts of the Spirit. And I submit to you further that there is only one Church in all the world that so much as claims to have every essential identifying characteristic of the Church organized and perfected by Christ and his Apostles anciently, and

that one Church is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Now, may I say by way both of testimony and of doctrine, that you and I are living in the era of restoration. We are living in the times of restitution. The heavens are no longer sealed. The voice of God is heard again. The kingdom is established on earth, and that kingdom is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it has again every grace and right, power, privilege, and authority that the Almighty ever gave to the Saints in primitive times.

And now we are nearing the end of the world. The time is not far distant when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and if you and I live worthily and walk as most of us already know we should, we will be entitled to receive an eternal inheritance in his eternal world.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, and he will be followed by Elder Clifford E. Young.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles



HAVE always enjoyed listening to that beautiful little song, "The Prayer Perfect," and I am thinking just now of the last few words in that song:

And with all the needy, O divide, I pray.

This vast treasure of content that is mine today.

As we sit here, brothers and sisters, we are blessed with vast treasures of content, knowing full well and having the assurance that God lives, and that this is his Church and kingdom; know-

ing that if we will keep the commandments of the Lord, that we may go back into his presence; that we may reach out and bring our loved ones and our friends this same blessing. This brings a great measure of contentment. But we must not rest contented, for the Lord has placed upon our shoulders the responsibility, not only of perfecting our own lives, but also of teaching to all the world this gospel. That has been emphasized in this conference. In addition to that, he has given us the responsibility of identifying our dead kindred, of placing their names in the

temples and there receiving ordinances as proxies for them.

There are those, even among us, who belittle and minimize this part of the gospel plan. There are many in the world who believe it not at all, yet it is true, and it is indispensable to the welfare and the salvation, both of the living and of the dead! Since God is just, his divine plan of salvation includes the means and the power by which those who have died without a knowledge of the gospel may hear it and, if they will, may accept it and receive that which has already been mentioned in this conference; namely, the great gift of immortality and eternal life.

For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Peter 4:6.)

Inasmuch as God is a just God, the same principles, the same ordinances, the same conditions that apply to the salvation of the living apply also to the salvation of the dead—even that of baptism, which we know is indispensable for our membership in the Church and kingdom of God. The Lord has said,

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.)

That means he must be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost.

Now, when the Savior said that, he made no exceptions. There was no distinction between the living and the dead. All were included; all must meet this prerequisite for membership and citizenship in that kingdom.

Wilford Woodruff, seventy-eight years ago tomorrow, said something about this, when he made this significant statement:

God is no respecter of persons; he will not give privileges to one generation and withhold them from another; and the whole human family, from Father Adam down to our day, have got to have the privilege, somewhere, of hearing the gospel

of Christ; . . . They have to be preached to in the spirit world. But nobody will baptize them there, therefore someone must administer to them by proxy here in the flesh, that they may be judged according to man in the flesh and have part in the first resurrection. (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 179.)

And then a few years later this great man said this: "We have got to enter these temples and redeem our dead. . . . This is the great work of the last dispensation, the redemption of the living and of the dead."

Now, this is a tremendous task, a stupendous assignment. I feel sure, however, that as we work with the means and powers that we have and do our utmost toward this great work of redeeming the dead, that the Lord will, as he has done in the immediate past, provide additional ways and means and improved facilities by which this work can be better accomplished.

It is for a good reason that he has placed this responsibility upon us. It teaches us unselfishness. It teaches us love of others. It teaches us to be Christ-like and even become, in reality, saviors upon Mount Zion.

Another reason that he has placed it upon our shoulders is to provide through us the necessary ordinances for those who have passed on. My brothers and sisters, we cannot escape this assignment on behalf of the dead!

Now in order that the righteous dead may receive by proper authority the ordinances that are necessary for the blessings of immortality and eternal life, the Lord long, long ago promised the world that he would send from his presence one who possessed the authority and the keys to begin anew this work upon the earth. The promise was made through Malachi, the prophet, when he said,

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. (Mal. 4:5-6.)

Monday, April 5

Now, the Prophet Joseph Smith said that this word *turn* should be understood to mean *bind* or *seal* the hearts of the children to their fathers, and vice versa. I like the words of Moroni to the Prophet Joseph in regard to this. Said Moroni:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers—

as they have done in a most marvelous way.

If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (D. & C. 2:1-3.)

The literal fulfilment of this promise has been made in our day! If we turn to the 110th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we will find that the Prophet Malachi's prediction has been literally fulfilled: that Elijah has come. On April 3, 1836, when Joseph and Oliver were in the Kirtland Temple, after certain ceremonies, including the sacrament, had been taken care of, they retired to the pulpit; and the veils being dropped, they bowed their heads in solemn and silent prayer, and then they declared that after arising from this prayer, that

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

We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork 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. . . . (*Ibid.*, 110:1-3.)

The Lord told them that their sins were forgiven; that he had accepted that house, the temple in Kirtland, as the work of their hands; that it should be only the beginning of such things, and that

Third Day

. . . the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house.

And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; . . . (*ibid.*, 9-10)

and the Savior told them this was only the beginning of the blessings which shall be poured upon the heads of the people all over the world.

We have seen, in part, the fulfilment of that.

After this vision closed, Moses appeared to them and committed to them the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth. This was followed by the visitation of Elias who committed the gospel of Abraham, then they declared that:

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,” (And this is the important thing). . . .

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. (*Ibid.*, 13-16.)

Thus, my brothers and sisters, has the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy come to pass in this time of ours? He has come, and the powers that were given to Joseph have been extended to others, so that the people of the whole world might, if they will, be blessed, and so that all of the ordinances of the gospel might be administered to in power and in righteousness.

Now, I know that men say, and they have said to me, “We do not believe

this." But the disbelief of a million men does not change the fact! The restoration of this priesthood will, as has been predicted, save the earth from being utterly wasted at the coming of the Lord, otherwise his purposes would be thwarted; and we are told he has said that his purposes and his designs will not be frustrated, but only the designs and the purposes and the acts of men will be brought to naught.

We must not assume that the mission of Elijah and the powers that were given by him are confined only to the dead, for the living also must receive these same ordinances and have them performed if they would have exaltation and eternal life in the celestial kingdom of heaven.

How wonderful it is to see the young people—all people, come to the temples of the Lord in great numbers and receive their blessings. How fitting it is to see the parents and the grandparents come with their children. This is the ideal way, for if we are going to be together as families in the next life, it has always seemed to me that we should get some practice in getting together with our families under such circumstances in this life.

The obligation of the Latter-day Saints is three-fold:

1. To prepare themselves to go to the temple and receive their blessings and to teach their children to live so that they may be worthy and have a desire to go.
2. To gather the records of our dead and place them in the temples.
3. To go to the house of the Lord

and there give our services occasionally to those who have passed on without a knowledge of the gospel.

Only by so doing can we perfect ourselves and receive the fulness of joy here and hereafter!

The Prophet Joseph has said that we should not procrastinate in this work. I know that many are active in it, many are anxiously engaged in it, but the majority of us are unconcerned. We must not leave it to Aunt Martha or someone else to identify our dead and to go to the temples; we must not assume that it has been done; it is our individual obligation to do this work! The Prophet has said that the Saints have not too much time to save and redeem the dead and to gather together the living relatives, and that is important, that they may be saved also. "They have not too much time," he said, "before the earth will be smitten and the consumption decreed falls upon the world." (See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 330.) So, before that day comes, while the day lasts and before the night comes when no man can work, let us rejoice in this great restoration and participate in it to our joy and to our satisfaction. May we do this, I pray humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen has just spoken to us, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles



LAST FRIDAY the General Authorities met with the mission presidents who had been serving in this country and in Central America. It was an inspiring meeting, and they who were there expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the privi-

lege of coming here to the headquarters of the Church and meeting with their brethren and reporting their labors, feeling the spirit of testimony as expressed by their associates and by all who were privileged to speak in the meeting which was held in the temple.

Then we have had our brethren who