

## ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

*Patriarch to the Church*

**M**Y BROTHERS AND SISTERS: I assure you I need your faith and prayers in my behalf. If there is anyone who needs the help of the Lord, I do. I can heartily endorse all that has been said at this conference, and I have faith that I can endorse everything that will be said in this conference. I like Brother Mark Petersen's comment of a postscript to what has been said, and I would like to add my thought as another postscript.

In the very beginning, God placed Adam on the earth, and he gave him dominion over the fish and the fowl and the cattle and over all the earth. Now this would seem like a pretty exalted position for some people today, but even though he had dominion over all the earth, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone," (Gen. 2:18) and he gave unto him the woman Eve to be a companion and helpmeet. Then God gave unto them the first great commandment to multiply and replenish the earth.

We are not told how long they lived in the Garden of Eden before they partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and were cast out of the garden to start their mortal existence. The point I want to make clear is that God himself established the first family unit. It is not an institution developed by man which can be outgrown and cast aside in the course of human progress. All that is nearest and dearest in our lives is associated with our families. Love has its center here, and where love is, there we find happiness also. Truly, it is not good for man to be alone. The Lord in his wisdom has provided a way for man to be happy on this earth, and to carry that joy on through all eternity. The greatest joy and happiness comes through the family unit. It has been so through all mortality, so why will it not be so in the next life? This family unit is so important that the Lord has made it known to us that all the families of the earth must be sealed together. By the time of the end of the millennium all of Adam's posterity who ac-

cept the gospel must be sealed together as one family by the power of the priesthood, which is the power to seal on earth and it shall be sealed in heaven, and to bind on earth, and it shall be bound in heaven.

Every person who comes to the earth must have an opportunity to receive all the blessings of these sealings if he will accept, sometime before the end of the millennium. There could not be a just God if it were otherwise. These sealing blessings are obtained, first, through the ordinance of baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ. Then the wife is to be sealed to the husband for time and for all eternity, and those children who are born outside of this wedlock must be sealed to their parents that they may receive the blessings as though they were born under the new and everlasting covenant.

Those who have died without this law may have the privilege of receiving these blessings by proxy. That is where our responsibility comes in. We must first teach the gospel to the living, and then for those of our families who died without the law we must gather their records that this great and important work can be done for them.

Quoting the Prophet Joseph Smith in Section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants on this subject:

And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.

And now, in relation to the baptism for the dead, I will give you another quotation of Paul, 1 Corinthians, 15:29: *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?* (Italics added.)

And again, in connection with this quotation I will give you a quotation from one of the prophets, who had his eye fixed on the restoration of the priesthood, the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an

Friday, October 1

First Day

especial manner this most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, namely, the baptism for the dead; for Malachi says, last chapter, verses 5th and 6th: *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.* (Italics added.)

. . . the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. (D. & C. 128:15-18.)

This does not refer to just the few of us who are members of the Church today—a handful of his children—but this work must be done for all of our ancestors before we can be sure of our salvation. It is a tremendous task! At the rate we are baptizing for the dead in our temples today, plus the baptisms of the living, it is estimated that it would take over four thousand years to baptize the two billion four hundred million who are now living on the earth, without counting the dead. Are there as many righteous dead as there are people living today? If so, how is this work going to be accomplished? It is a task which must be done. All of God's children who will accept the gospel must become welded into one great family. For this purpose he has seen fit to send choice spirits to various parts of the earth. These choice spirits accept the gospel when it is brought to them. Then from that nucleus, others of their families and friends accept the gospel. They come to the temples of the Lord and perform their own sealings and then the work for their dead ancestors.

Converts have three sealing steps they must be present for in the temple: Those who are married must have the wife sealed to the husband, then their children sealed to them, then those parents are to be sealed to their parents. Those who are born under the covenant have these choice blessings automatically.

Do we appreciate those blessings? Many converts would willingly spend

the rest of their lives in whatever effort is necessary to obtain the opportunity of being sealed to their parents and consider it well worth the effort.

Then we need to gather all the records of our ancestors that we possibly can. I do not mean just a halfhearted attempt. Seek diligently, constantly, and prayerfully. Do not wait for a convenient time—it will never come. Do not put it off until old age when we are not able to do anything else. We never know what tomorrow will bring, and we must see that the work is done, completing the sealing of each family group. There is no one who can escape the responsibility of this work. We will not be excused because we thought an aunt or some other relative was doing the work.

One young lady, a genealogist, was asked the question, "What if you find an undesirable character in your family tree, such as a pirate or convict or the like?" She answered, "My responsibility does not concern how he lived but just that he lived and died. After all, I owe my existence to him, and my only way of paying that debt is to do the baptism and sealing work for him. It will be up to him to accept it."

This is a responsibility for each of us. Not one of us can be made perfect without this work. I doubt if the Lord will accept the excuse that we are so busy working in the auxiliary organizations that we cannot spend a part of our time in genealogy. Any part of this we do not do which we should do must be done by someone else, for it must be done. If we shirk our responsibilities, how can we expect to receive the blessings?

To those scattered around the world, may I say a word of encouragement? Be of good cheer, be diligent, trust in the Lord, and he will help you. You were probably placed where you are to do a special work in gathering records or to fulfil a special missionary assignment. If you will let him, the Lord will give you success in your work and much happiness in so doing.

May his blessing be upon all those who are diligent in this work, that we may prepare the way for his coming, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.