

FIRST DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The Conference reconvened at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, April 4.

President David O. McKay, who presided and conducted the meeting, opened the services of this, the second session, by making the following remarks:

President David O. McKay:

Among the educators whom we welcomed this morning, we omitted Dr. Howard S. McDonald of the Los Angeles State College. We welcome him. We also omitted making mention of a group of seminary students. This note was handed to me since our dismissal from this morning's meeting: "In the balcony on your left" (that is, this morning, we hope they are here now) "are forty seminary students from Arimo, Idaho, who boarded a bus at three o'clock this morning in order to be here early." If you happen to doze this afternoon, we shall understand why. We welcome you.

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in the second session of the One Hundred Twenty-ninth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All of the General Authorities are present this afternoon as they were this morning. This session, as the one this morning, will be broadcast as a public service over television and radio stations throughout the West. These services are also being broadcast in the Assembly Hall and in Barratt Hall by television.

We are favored again by the presence of the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses, with Professor

Ralph Woodward conducting. Elder Roy M. Darley is at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses rendering, "His Yoke Is Easy." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder C. Leland Davey, president of the Cannon Stake.

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses, conducted by Ralph Woodward, with Roy M. Darley at the organ, sang the selection, "His Yoke Is Easy."

Elder C. Leland Davey, president of the Cannon Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

Elder C. Leland Davey, president of the Cannon Stake, offered the invocation. The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses will now favor us with, "O Lord, Our God, Vouchsafe Thy Grace," conducted by Professor Ralph Woodward.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve, will speak following the singing.

"O Lord, Our God, Vouchsafe Thy Grace," was sung by the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses.

President David O. McKay:

President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve, will be our first speaker, and he will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, I need the help of the Spirit of the Lord. Elder Christiansen reported his visit to the various branches of the Church in Europe. I made a promise to the good members of the Church in the far

Pacific that when I returned I would remember them to you and express to you their love and fellowship. It is a glorious thing to go into a country, one so far away, and find members of the Church who think and act just as we

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do here, with the same testimony of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am fulfilling my promise in expressing to you their goodwill and fellowship.

For the few minutes that I have I would like to take a text from the words of our Savior, “. . . except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5.)

I am firmly convinced that nowhere else in the world, outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is there anyone who has the authority to perform the ordinances that would bring the birth of the water and of the Spirit to mankind. That would have to be from someone who has the authority of the priesthood of God, and that authority was revealed in these latter-days, the Aaronic Priesthood first by John the Baptist to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and then the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John, also to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

And from that source we have obtained the priesthood of God by which we act and by which we go forth into the world to preach the gospel to those who sit in darkness. I know this statement is not pleasing to the great majority of people upon the face of the earth, but nevertheless it is true. And I realize that it is impossible for us—all things are possible, of course, to the Lord—but it is impossible for us with all the means that we have at our command and the means at our command have increased wonderfully in the last few years—but we cannot reach every soul living upon the face of the earth. They are dying off every day. They are being born every day into the world.

However, the Word of the Lord being true, the time must come when the message of salvation will reach every soul. How is that to be done? We do the best we can with all the facilities at our command, through the preaching of the gospel, disseminating the truth by word of mouth, by the many facilities that are at our command, through the magazines that are published, through the press and every other means. But it is impossible for us with the facilities such as they are, to reach every soul.

Furthermore, there have been millions upon millions of people who have lived in this world who never had the opportunity to hear of Christ, never heard his name; they lived at a time and in a place where his name was not known, where the gospel did not reach them, not because of any fault on the part of our Father in heaven nor of his servants to reach the peoples of the earth, but because from the beginning of time men have loved Satan more than they loved God, and they have turned away and refused to receive the truth, have raised their children in darkness, and they have died in darkness, so far as the gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned.

Nevertheless, the promises of the Lord must and will be fulfilled. From the very beginning of this dispensation, just a few months after the organization of the Church, the Lord gave a revelation in which he foreshadowed the salvation of the human family, all of those who would repent and believe. I shall read to you this part of the Lord's Preface to the book of his commandments; the words of Jesus Christ, himself.

“Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.” (D&C 1:1.)

Now, that is to all those who are living. But the Lord goes on to enlarge this thought. And he says:

“For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.” (*Idem* 2.)

The Lord has not limited that to any dispensation or any age upon the face of the earth. He has made that just as broad as the history of mankind, and he adds:

“And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.” (*Idem* 3.)

It seems so strange to me that the peoples of this world since the days of the great apostasy, when the apostles of old were removed and those who held the priesthood were destroyed, that

the world could fall into the awful condition which today prevails, which denies salvation to every soul born into this world who never heard the name of Jesus Christ or never had an opportunity to repent and be baptized or receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They have held out no hope for all of these people of the nations, pagan or otherwise, who have dwelt upon the face of the earth without the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Lord is just, and he has made it clear that the time will come when every soul shall have an opportunity to hear the truth. That does not mean that every soul has the opportunity or will have that opportunity in this mortal world. Millions have died without that opportunity. It has been no fault of theirs, but the fault lies with their fathers before them, who turned away from the truth which truth was given in the beginning to Adam who was commanded to teach these things to his children. The scriptures say that Adam did teach these things to his children, but that they loved Satan more than they loved God, and Satan came among them and said, "I, too, am a son of God, believe it not, and they believed it not and from that time forth men became carnal, sensual and devilish," (see Moses 5:13) and so darkness spread over the face of the earth.

In his justice, the Lord has revealed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, just as he revealed it in the days of the apostles, that there is a salvation even for the dead and the time must come when every soul must have an opportunity to hear it. Those who did not get the opportunity to hear it in this world will have that opportunity in the world of spirits, and Peter made that very clear in his Epistles, and it is only fair that those who died without a knowledge of the gospel should have the opportunity to hear it, and the Lord revealed that great truth to the Prophet Joseph Smith, that the time would come when the gospel of the kingdom would be declared to the dead and they who never had the opportunity of hearing it should have that opportunity given to them, and if they would repent in that spirit world then we could go into the temples of the Lord and perform the ordinances for

them vicariously, being saviors upon Mount Zion, and thus give unto the dead the opportunity to hear the truth, to repent of their sins, and if they will repent and turn away from evil and accept the truth, we can go into the temples of the Lord and perform the ordinances for them which will be valid unto them just the same as if they were living upon the face of the earth.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a vicarious work. Christ came into this world and died for mankind. He did not die just for those who repented of their sins and received his gospel. His death upon the cross brought salvation to every living soul, so far as the resurrection from the dead is concerned, and every soul born into this world shall receive the resurrection from the dead because he was not guilty of bringing death into the world, and man is not penalized because death came into the world, but naturally he has to die—that is part of the mortal life—but he will be raised again in the resurrection no matter who he is, no matter when he lived, no matter what he believed or what he failed to believe. That is a universal gift from Jesus Christ to every soul.

It is a different matter, however, so far as the kingdom of God is concerned, and no soul is going to enter into that kingdom until he has received either in this life in person or by proxy because he was not here to do it for himself, baptism for the remission of his sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. What a wonderful gift it is the Lord has placed into our hands, to bring salvation to the dead, to those who are willing to repent and receive the truth.

I have no idea in my mind that every soul that has lived upon the face of the earth, who has died and gone to the spirit world, is going to repent and receive the gospel. There will be many that will not do that. Our scriptures point to that fact. They are not going to receive the gospel in the spirit world, when their souls are full of bitterness and hate towards the truth, but they have a right to have it taught to them.

The Lord went into the spirit world, himself, turned the key for the salvation of the dead and our elders when they pass to the next world, go into that

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world to continue their labors of preaching the gospel, bringing to repentance all who are willing to repent and receive the truth, that they might come into the kingdom of God, or as Paul calls it, "the family of God in heaven and on earth." For it is the family of God. The kingdom of God will be one great family. We call ourselves brothers and sisters. In very deed we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ through the gospel of Jesus Christ, sons and daughters of God, and entitled to the fulness of the blessings of his kingdom if we will repent and keep these commandments.

In conclusion I want to read to you one or two statements dealing with our responsibilities towards the dead. First from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us, is to seek after our dead." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 356.)

"This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it, in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation." (*Ibid.*, p. 193.)

"It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children . . . without us, they could not be made perfect, nor we without them; the fathers without the children, nor the children without the fathers . . . I wish you to understand this subject, for it is important." (*Ibid.*, p. 337.)

"We have a work to do just as important in its sphere as the Savior's work was in its sphere. Our fathers cannot be made perfect without us; we cannot be made perfect without them. They have done their work and now sleep. We are now called upon to do ours; which is to be the greatest work man ever performed on the earth." Brigham Young. (*Discourses*, p. 406.)

"The ordinance of sealing must be performed here man to man, and woman to man, and children to parents, etc., until the chain of generation is made perfect in the sealing ordinances back to Father Adam. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 407.)

"Brethren and sisters, lay these things to heart. Let us go on with our records . . . I pray God that as a people our eyes may be opened to see, our ears to hear, and our hearts to understand the great and mighty work that rests upon our shoulders, and that the God of heaven requires at our hand. . . ." President Willford Woodruff. (*The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Vol. 13, p. 152.)

"This is the day in which the Lord expects his Church at least to inaugurate the great work of turning 'the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.'" President David O. McKay (*The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, Vol. 25, p. 59 or *Gospel Ideals*, p. 19.)

"What about your great great ancestors who never heard the name of Jesus Christ? . . . You may have the opportunity of gathering the names of your ancestors and, by being baptized for by proxy, they may become members of the kingdom of God in the other world as we are members here."—President David O. McKay. (See *Instructor*, November 1958, p. 322.)

Now, brethren, these are our responsibilities, and the Lord requires this work at our hands. The Church has gone to great expense endeavoring to gather the records of the dead, and I want to say to you, has been very, very successful in that labor to gather in the records of your ancestors so that we could go into the temples of the Lord and perform these labors for them so that all who are willing to repent and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ may be brought into his kingdom and into that great family of God, which is both in heaven and on earth.

And I humbly pray that this spirit will take hold of the members of the Church, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Brother Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, who will be followed by Elder Spencer W. Kimball.