

Sunday, October 7

Third Day

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the

Twelve, has just addressed us. Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, also an Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

ELDER EL RAY L. CHRISTIANSEN*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My beloved brothers and sisters, I concur in all that has been said today by those who have spoken from this stand and heartily approve the actions that have been taken in sustaining these brethren in their positions.

Under the direction of the First Presidency, I have, since my appointment to the temples ten months ago, visited all of the temples in the Church, some of them several times. Meetings have been held with the temple officials and with the workers in which we discussed ways and means by which we may improve and better the conditions in the temples, beginning at the entrance, so that the work as a whole, which is carried on there, the higher ordinances of the priesthood, will be approved by the Lord, for they are indeed his holy houses. We desire to conduct the sacred work in a manner that is enlightening, edifying, and uplifting to the young people and others who come to these holy places for their own blessings, endowments, and sealings.

We desire to carry on the work in a manner in which it will be more rewarding to those who come on behalf of those who have passed away, even in a manner that will bring comfort and assurance to those who come with heavy hearts. A constant need for maintaining greater reverence and kindness is recognized. I am pleased to find that the temples themselves are immaculately kept and well maintained. Among the ordinance workers I find devotion to duty that is seldom matched. I have often said that I have never seen a demonstration quite so wonderful as that which is shown by those who come as ordinance workers day after day, week after week, year after year, seldom if ever failing to meet their appointments, laboring and attending to the needs of those who enter those holy places.

The desire and willingness on the part of temple presidents, their asso-

ciates, and the workers to join in a united effort better to co-ordinate and improve the work is gratifying indeed. But there is much to be accomplished and much to be hoped for.

Many of our members, I find, are coming to the temples under difficulty, especially in foreign lands, making sacrifices, financial and otherwise, in order to bless and to be blessed. Yet, because of these extreme efforts they are perhaps the happiest of all.

Picture, if you will, a large group from Tonga, fathers and mothers with their children selling practically all that they possess, their furniture, their animals, their vehicles, some of their personal items, all except their modest homes, in order to provide funds for the trip of over 1,000 miles by slow boat requiring three weeks of travel, to receive their blessings. And then these wonderful people remaining at the temple for three weeks in order to extend the same gifts, powers, and blessings to others. I have never met yet such a happy and delighted group.

The elders quorum from the Hamburg Stake goes to the temple once every three months. A group from Berlin Stake spent three weeks attending every session, using their precious vacation time and money to do it. Each of these two groups has performed ordinances, the endowment, for nearly 400 people. From Norway, from Finland, from Denmark, Sweden, and Mexico, Canada, here at home and everywhere, it is the same. They whose hearts are turned to their fathers go to their temples regardless of the difficulty. An almost endless number of stories could be told, giving evidence of appreciation for the temple ordinances, but time does not permit.

Those here and in every area whose souls reach out on behalf of others, who cannot help themselves, surely are applying in their lives the second great

commandment in which we are told to love our neighbor as ourselves. The effort and the accomplishment of many individuals in genealogical research and temple work is commendable, but it is evident that only a small percentage of the membership is actively participating in the two-phase work. They realize that redemption of the dead is of *primary* importance rather than of secondary importance, and they do something about it! Vicarious work is a foundation stone of the gospel. There is no full salvation for the living without vicarious service; we would not be sufficiently qualified and prepared for that salvation.

If there had not been that unmatched love of the Father to sacrifice his Son for us, painful as the decision must have been to our Father, and if Jesus had not been willing, there would have been for us no salvation from death. We would have been subjected to Satan, and our bodies would have remained in our graves forever. And yet, we may without great inconvenience, and in an atmosphere of peace, act in a vicarious way on behalf of others to prepare them to receive the greatest gift of all—eternal life.

May I ask you two golden questions? What do you know about your progenitors? What have you done in their behalf? (Note that I have borrowed that from the missionaries.) Even with these marvelous electronic machines that are coming into use now, there still is a need for research on the part of individuals and by groups in order that these machines may be fed. The Prophet Joseph gave us this warning.

"The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives, that they may be saved also, before the earth be smitten, and the consumption decreed by the Lord falls upon the world. . . ." (DHC, Vol. VI, p. 184.)

As I visit the temples, I find that the attendance at some of them is commendable, in others it is improving, and some of them, my brothers and sisters, are far from being fully utilized, not because of a scarcity of names, but, if I may say so, I think perhaps it may lie in the leadership back along the line who are so involved in other things that they do not stimulate and motivate their

people and organize them so that they may consistently attend to this indispensable part of the Lord's work. Consider that Elijah appeared, *in person*, to the Prophet Joseph and said this:

"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. (D&C 110:14-16.)

These keys and powers have been given to each succeeding President of the Church, and today they are held by President David O. McKay. This being true, each member of the Church has the inescapable obligation to see to it that:

1. He and his companion and their children are sealed at the altar for eternity. Every man should consider this his first duty. He who knowingly and without sufficient reason neglects to bind his loved ones as his own, will doubtless have no claim upon them after this life. Salvation for the dead is for those who die without a knowledge of the gospel, so far as the glory of the celestial world (which is the family world) is concerned. Families, united eternally, are the primary purpose of all life.

2. It is the duty of every man to see to it that the records of his progenitors are obtained, and

3. To see to it that the ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation are administered in behalf of his kindred dead.

Research and temple work are primarily the work of the priesthood; but thank goodness for the help the sisters give.

From the days of the Prophet Joseph down to the present time, each of the Presidents has charged the leaders of stakes and of missions and quorum presidencies to lead out and stimulate others in this vicarious service.

These obligations cannot be brushed aside. For ". . . as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us can-

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not be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect.” (D&C 128:15.)

I repeat an appeal made in these words by President David O. McKay: “May all who hold the priesthood sense more fully the spirit of Elijah and comprehend more clearly the necessity of giving to all who have gone beyond the veil the privilege of enjoying the blessings that follow compliance with the principles and ordinances of the everlasting gospel; that some day all

mankind, judged by the acts done in mortality, may receive their merited rewards, and those who are worthy be saved, sanctified, and glorified.” (The Improvement Era, p. 603, August 1959.)

May it be so, I pray, my brothers and sisters, and I testify to you that this is not the work of man but the work of God, and it is an integral part of his plan and his gospel to save the dead with the living. May he bless us in this respect, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

We are now nearing the close of a very remarkable conference, unusual in many respects. This conference has been directed primarily to an unseen audience, particularly yesterday morning and this Sunday morning.

Usually we speak mainly to those who are assembled in this great Tabernacle, but each speaker yesterday and today has been conscious of a listening audience that goes beyond this Tabernacle and this city, this Church, this country, into Europe, the South Seas, South Africa—and all this has been possible through the kindness of our television and radio officials—Brother Arch Madsen and his associates here at KSL, and through assistants and associates with him, and other leading officials, who are co-operating in efforts to bring this gospel to the people of the world.

I wish to express appreciation to Brother James O. Conkling, who has just been appointed President of the International Educational Broadcasting Corporation. We asked him to take charge of a group of leading, influential men to bring into operation short-wave facilities by which conferences and other programs, with the assistance of our own Tabernacle Choir, originating here in Salt Lake City, could be transmitted across the waters. We wish to acknowledge in your presence today the inspiration of the Lord upon these leading men in the Church, and many of whom are not in the Church, who are giving their time and means towards the accomplishment of this great possibility of carrying the message of the restored

gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

This has been one of the greatest conferences, I suppose, that we have ever held in the Church. The music today, as you know, has been furnished by the Tabernacle Choir. We have been inspired by their singing at both sessions today and Saturday morning when their singing was heard by millions. Many radio and television stations have been opened to us because of the singing of this great organization. Their contribution to our missionary work is inestimable.

In July of this year, they participated in the first formal world-wide television program by way of Telstar satellite, held at Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. At this time, the choir was seen and heard on television by millions across the ocean in Europe and England in addition to the millions in this country.

In August they made a tour of the Northwest, giving two concerts on August 15th and 16th at the Seattle World's Fair. People from all over the world attended these concerts, and it was reported that the concert hall was so crowded on both nights that many were turned away.

We appreciate all who have furnished the singing throughout this conference. First, the singing for the Friday morning and afternoon sessions by the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the Central Idaho and Bannock welfare regions. We accept their efforts and are inspired by their singing, but very few of us ever stop to think of