

nance work done for their dead ancestors. This record containing the completed temple ordinances is a sacrifice of the living for those of their dead loved ones to bind them into the family of Jesus Christ—not only to be redeemed from death, but also, if accepted, exalting them into the very presence of God the Eternal Father.

Assignment to Priesthood and members

This program is the beginning, then, for compiling an individual family record by which members of the priesthood can help make their calling and election sure. As the prophet Joseph Smith declared:

“The greatest responsibility . . . that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, Second Edition, p. 356.)

Why is this so? Because the work of Jesus Christ must be made complete and perfect through the help of those of us who profess to be his servants so that every man and woman who desires to do so may make a personal covenant upon this earth to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord, their Redeemer, and their King.

Of him I testify in the name of the Only Begotten Son, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTENSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I stand before you, my brethren and sisters, in humility and in gratitude for the assurance I have that this is the Church of Jesus Christ, restored in fulfillment of the promises of the Lord made through his prophets and recorded both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament and in other volumes of scripture, and that his prophet-leader in our day is President David O. McKay, who sits with us here today. We are so thankful, President McKay, that you are here.

Christ's earthly reign

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims without reservation or hesitation the doctrine that Christ will return to the earth to reign in power and great glory. One of our articles of faith states: “We believe that . . . Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.” (Tenth article of faith.)

It will be an actual, literal return of the Lord in person. His coming is assured by Job, who exclaimed: “. . . I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” (Job 19:25.)

From the writings of Moses we learn

concerning the revelation given to Enoch: “And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah.” (Moses 7:60.)

During his ministry upon the earth, Jesus gave his disciples assurance of his coming by saying: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matt. 16:27.)

To those who are not indifferent and who do not close their minds to the truth, the words of Jesus, revealed only a few decades ago, are clear and understandable. To the Prophet Joseph Smith came this promise: “For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, the time is soon at hand that I shall come in a cloud with power and great glory.

“And it shall be a great day at the time of my coming, for all nations shall tremble.” (D&C 34:7-8.)

“. . . be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.” (D&C 65:5. Italics added.)

Wednesday, April 6

First Day

There is no ambiguity in these words. That the Lord will come again no one needs doubt!

But *when* will this stupendous event take place?

Ever since his ascension into heaven, the faithful followers of Jesus have looked hopefully for the day when he would return. However, he himself was most explicit in explaining that the precise time of his return would not be known in advance. ". . . of that day and hour," he said, "knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

". . . for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44.)

There is no fixed time for a generation, no year or precise date given by the Lord when events shall take place, and it is folly for us to attempt to do it for him. He will, however, see that his word is fulfilled, for he has said, ". . . one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5:18.)

So while the day and the hour are not revealed and will not be made known to man, we can, by learning to understand the signs of the times, by watching the development of the work of God among the nations, and by noting the rapid fulfillment of significant prophecies, perceive the progressive evidence of the approaching event.

Signs of His coming

Indeed, most of the significant signs that the scriptures say will precede his coming have already taken place. These signs and noteworthy developments include:

1. A universal apostasy from the Church first established by Christ. Paul taught the Thessalonians, saying: ". . . that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. . . ." (2 Thess. 2:3.)

And he reminded Timothy that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth. . ." (2 Tim. 4:3-4.)

2. The gospel in its fullness has been restored as promised, and the Book of Mormon has come forth as prophesied by Ezekiel. (Ezek. 37.)

3. Likewise, the priesthood has been restored through the visitation of heavenly beings.

4. The gospel has, for more than a hundred years, been taught to thousands of people in many nations.

5. As promised by the prophets, both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, the Church has been established in conformity with the original Church.

6. In fulfillment of Malachi's promise, Elijah has restored the keys of the sealing power, which are exercised in the many temples throughout the world today.

Other marvelous signs and manifestations will be witnessed both in heaven and in earth prior to his coming. We must wait for them to develop.

How will his coming affect the inhabitants of the earth?

The very thought of it thrills the human soul! We are told that his coming will be sublime and glorious; awesome and terrible—terrible to the unrepentant and ungodly, but glorious and delightful to those who are worthy of him and who are ready to meet him.

"For," he has said, "I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand.

". . . for they will not repent. . ." (D&C 29:11, 17.)

The righteous shall be "caught up"

At his coming Christ will cause the hosts of righteous ones who have passed from life to come forth from the graves, and those who "are alive and remain shall be caught up" with them to meet him. (1 Thess. 4:17. See also D&C 88:96.)

"And all they who have mourned shall be comforted.

"And all they who have given their lives for my name shall be crowned.

"Therefore, let your hearts be comforted . . . ; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God." (D&C 101:14-16.)

Prepare for His coming

Under such conditions, all of us will desire to live with him and with our loved ones upon the earth. And we can do this if we, like the five wise among the ten virgins spoken of by the Lord in the parable, will not only *desire* to meet and be with him but also make the preparation necessary to do so. We are not without direction in our preparation for his coming. He has given in the restored gospel the pattern to be followed.

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord made this known to the Church, saying:

"And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a *standard for my people*, and for the Gentiles to seek it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me." (D&C 45:9. Italics added.)

". . . at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

"For they that are wise and have . . . taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day." (D&C 45:56-57.)

"And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy." (D&C 45:71.)

"Come, Let Us Anew"

The words of a lovely song come to mind: "If Christ should come tomorrow, what would he do? what would he say?" What would *we* do? What would *we* say?

"O that each in the day of his coming may say,

'I have fought my way through.

I have finished the work thou didst give me to do.'

Oh, that each from the Lord may receive this glad word:

'Well and faithfully done;

Enter into my joy and sit down on my throne,

Enter into my joy and sit down on my throne.'

("Come, Let Us Anew," *Hymns*, 17.)

It is then that will be seen a fulfillment of the Lord's own prayer, which has been sung so beautifully today: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10.)

May it so be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Master. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We shall now hear from Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. After the remarks by Elder Longden, the congregation and choir will join in singing, "How Firm a Foundation," conducted by John R. Halliday.

ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

On September 23, 1909, I walked with my father, holding his hand, down a street called Edge Lane in Liverpool, England, into the office of the then British Mission and had the privilege of shaking the hand of President Charles W. Penrose just before

we boarded ship to come to this great country of America.

Dedication of Oldham Chapel

In March of that same year, President Penrose dedicated a little corrugated, galvanized meetinghouse in