

Friday, September 30

First Day

to be "medieval forgeries." (*Newsweek*, June 15, 1966, p. 67.) Still another scholar suggests that they don't make sense. "Actually they make very good sense, but it is a sense quite contrary to conventional ideas of Judaism and Christianity." (Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, [Deseret Book Company, 1964], p. 64.)

Repudiating the scrolls is one way of preserving that dominant hard-core Christian concept that my radio friend said was common to, and characteristic of, all Christian churches. But truth crushed to earth shall rise again.

Our own O. Preston Robinson sums up the reaction of these scholars as follows:

"Faced with the overwhelming evidence of the Gospel's antiquity and bereft of a knowledge of Christ's original authorship of it, these scholars flounder in uncertainty and can only conclude that Christ was a great teacher, an imitator, but not in reality the Son of God. If Jesus was nothing more than a clever teacher utilizing the ideas and principles promulgated by others before him, he would necessarily have been one of the world's most deceptive frauds." (*How Old Is Christ's Gospel?* p. 5.)

Evaluate the whole, not part only

My personal reaction is this: If these floundering scroll scholars, if these confused Christian leaders would take time out to examine the other witnesses that I have cited, particularly the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants, they could help a frus-

trated church membership restore Jesus Christ to the status of a Son of God, the very Savior of all mankind. He did come in the flesh, nearly 2,000 years ago, to restore his gospel which, after his death and the death of his apostles, was lost to the world. But, thanks to a merciful God, it has been restored again in this latter day through the great American Prophet Joseph Smith. To this I bear my humble witness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I might say to President McKay, who is listening in, that the voting is unanimously in the affirmative.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us.

The congregation and the Samoan chorus will now join in singing, "Oh Say What is Truth." After the singing Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will speak to us.

Singing: "O Say What is Truth"
—Congregation and Oahu Samoan Choir.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Burton.

Elder Theodore M. Burton
Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Temples among ancient Israelites

Among the ancient Israelites, the temple of God was the pivotal point around which the whole nation revolved. This building was considered to be the house of the Lord and was made as beautiful as man could make it, for it was to be a place to which

God could come on the earth to reveal his will to his prophet. Thus, to be near the temple was a blessing, and to go into it was a great privilege. However, not all the people were permitted to go into the temple. This right was limited only to the priests, and only the high priest could go into the inner court. There were un-

doubtedly some in that day who thought this practice was discriminatory, but that was the word of the Lord, and it was obeyed.

Temples among Latter-day Saints

So modern temples constructed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are built as houses of the Lord and are as beautiful as we can make them in a simple, dignified manner. Entrance to these temples is restricted to those who have proved their faithfulness and loyalty to God, and the temple serves as a pivotal point in our belief, being a place of revelation of the will of God to man.

Importance of pre-mortal existence

Let us consider the need for temples in our day. First let us consider life itself. Life on this earth is beautiful and wonderful, despite some of the terrible things that happen. A newborn infant is truly a wonder, and a little child is easy to love. Instinctively we love all little ones. But did the total life of that infant begin at birth, or will it cease at death? Reason and instinct tell us otherwise. Talents and potentials and spiritual gifts differ from child to child.

Where did these differences come from? We claim they were brought here as a result of a previous life. This previous life, lived in the spirit, is the basis of the present talents and gifts that we now enjoy. A premortal existence can explain much of life and can account for the differences that we see around us in mortal life. How otherwise could God be just?—for there is no question that people differ, and there is no question in my mind but that God is just and merciful to all his children.

This belief in a previous life is based on scripture. When the Lord called the prophet Jeremiah he said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. 1:5.)

This doctrine of a premortal life must have been taught by Jesus, for his apostles used this teaching to ask a question:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:1-2.)

How could the man have sinned before birth unless he had lived before? Life on this earth is a gift of God given to us as a reward for previous virtue. But his disciples failed to understand that so-called curses are oftentimes blessings. Jesus reminded them of the danger of passing judgment based on mortal existence alone:

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:3.)

Note that he did not rebuke them for this doctrine, but merely told them not to pass judgment on people based on what we can see and experience as mortal beings. As spirit children of God, we covenanted to agree to accept this life. But life on this earth does have a purpose, and much of what we experience in this life is based on the kind of life we led before we came here. One thing we can state with confidence: God will give an opportunity to every man to make the best use of whatever life he was assigned in his mortal station. God has made it possible for us to find on this earth the reason for existence and has given or will give every man, every woman, every child born upon this earth an opportunity to make a new and everlasting covenant with him to accept Jesus Christ as a living Lord and Savior.

Life now affects life hereafter

Just as this life depends upon the previous life, so this life is most important for the future, for life hereafter depends upon our life here in mortality. Jesus has shown us the actuality of the resurrection. We have overwhelming testimony of eternal life. It is not some mysterious nirvana, but an eternal life in the flesh that we will receive as individual beings. Life, therefore, follows death as dawn follows darkness, breaking forth into the light of a

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First Day

perfect day. What kind of life will this be for you? The ancient prophet wrote:

"Now behold, I have spoken unto you concerning the death of the mortal body, and also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption." (Al. 11:45.)

Action now for advantage hereafter

The prophet warned us, therefore, to do something about this now, while there is time left to us, and not delay our repentance, which is the way we change from our present lives to a better way of life. He told us:

"Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis [that is, standing before the judgment seat of God] that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world." (Al. 34:34.)

What he is trying to say is that although repentance later on is not impossible, it is certainly more difficult than it is right here in mortality.

May I then ask you now, "What kind of a life will you have in the hereafter?" I can answer this question for you quickly. "You will have the kind of life you earned here." You chose the life you are now leading. Are you happy with it? Would you like to improve it? You can, you know. You can choose your life hereafter, and you will have to live whatever kind of life you choose. Just as this life could have been beautiful for all, had we been willing to pay the price, so life hereafter can be beautiful for all. I ask you to look around you. Will your life be beautiful?

Do you love your wife or husband here? Has your marriage here been wonderful? Do you love your children—I mean *really* love them? Do

you love your father? Your mother? Has your family life been a joyful, happy one? If not, then get started to work on it to make that life beautiful. It will take effort, to be sure, but it is worth all the work and energy it takes.

If your family life has been beautiful and happy, you will want your loved ones near you hereafter. How happy could life be without those we love? Could you be happy alone? No one can, to be sure, and therefore the need for eternal companionship. I won't be happy without my family and loved ones, and neither will you, for real love should never die.

How can you tie this family to you? This is the goal of priesthood genealogy. All our efforts are to seal this union right here on earth. This power was given to his apostles by the Lord when he said:

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 18:18.)

These marriages cannot be united in heaven, but must be done right here on this earth. Jesus rebuked those who thought this could be done later when he said:

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt. 22:29-30.)

This sealing must be done in temples of God erected specifically for this holy ordinance. Hence there is a need to build temples of God in our day.

Research assignment to priesthood

Priesthood genealogy is not just seeking records of dead ancestors alone. It involves the completion of these temple ordinances. Priesthood genealogy is a work for the living, for those who are dead shall also live again. It is to make possible family life after death that we gather these records and do this ordinance work in temples for our family members while we are still in mortality. We prove our love for our dear ones by first

sealing our own family to us in the temples of God built for that purpose. Then we prove our love for our family by doing a useful service for them in their behalf—sealing them to us here on earth by the sealing power of the priesthood of God.

Thus the gospel permits love to become in our lives a reality that can exist throughout all eternity. It is love and spirituality at their very best. The key to true spirituality is priesthood genealogy. We invite you to prove your love for those you hold dear. Is your grief and longing for a loved one real? Do you love a wife enough to want her with you forever? Do you love a child enough to save it? If you do, then first perfect yourselves sufficiently so you can qualify to go into the temple and there do for them the work that will bind them to you forever.

God bless you to catch the spirit of Elijah, which was given in this dispensation along with the binding power to bind together the hearts of men in love one for another. This is the way life was meant to be. It is the basic doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know that it is the divine method by which Jesus Christ can exalt us into the presence of God the Eternal Father, and I bear you this witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us. Now we will listen to Brother John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Brother Milton R. Hunter of the Council of the Seventy.

Elder John Longden

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

It is the aim and responsibility of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to present the statement of the scriptures, which are clear in declaring the actual resurrection of the body.

Christ, and the miracle of resurrection

Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection and the pattern of what is an eternal principle applicable to all mankind. As he took up the same body that was laid in the tomb, so will all the human family receive a renewal, each of his own body. The change is that the blood, which is the life of the mortal body, will not occupy the immortal one. “. . . flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. . . .” (1 Cor. 15:50.)

It is evident, however, that flesh and bones occupied by immortal spirit can inherit the kingdom of God, for Jesus was the type and example. After his resurrection, he appeared unto many. He said to his disciples when they were “affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit”:

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” (Luke 24:37, 39.)

He then showed them his hands and feet, which had been pierced with spikes in the terrible hour of his crucifixion. While he was with them, he called for food; and they gave him broiled fish and honeycomb, which he ate in their presence.

What could be more real or tangible than this? When he was resurrected, many others received the same glorious blessing and came bodily out of their graves.

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

“And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” (Matt. 27:52-53.)

These, undoubtedly, were the bodies of the righteous who had embraced the gospel in the various dispensations prior to the coming and atonement of our Lord and Savior. The antediluvians who rejected Noah were not among this number. Peter informs us