

home. The family will be love-centered and thereby God-centered. The children in turn will reciprocate the love to the parents and strive to please them.

The goal of families who are actuated deeply by love will be to keep the commandments of our Savior in every detail and someday come back into the presence of the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son to dwell.

I bear my testimony that the true gospel of our Lord has been restored

to earth again, and that the Master's church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Harold B. Lee**

Thank you, Brother Hunter. We have just listened to Brother Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our concluding speaker.

## **Elder Howard W. Hunter**

*Of the Council of the Twelve*

Not long ago I listened to a noted speaker discuss modern trends with regard to youth. He called attention to the fact that young people today are following divergent courses to those traveled by their parents. The speaker pointed out the concern of parents for their children, whom they believe are being misdirected by the modern-day innovations of society.

### **Parent-children relationships**

Considerable time was spent by the speaker discussing the "generation gap" in the modern home between those of the new generation and their parents. He then took a position on the side of youth, claiming that there must be this generation gap if the world is to make real progress because parents are from the past generation, and we need new thinking, new ideas, and a change from the old. His contention was that if children follow the same course as parents, there would never be progress; therefore, we must accept the new even though it is forced by an uprising of

the modern generation against the established ways of the past. He asked this question: "Who can say that the old is better than the new until it is tried and tested?"

In continuing his argument, he stated that the breach or the differences between parents and youth need not be permanent, but for the temporary purpose of providing new thought and progress preliminary to a more mature relationship in which parents would better understand the ideals and endeavors of their children, and children would better understand their parents. The relationship between the two would become stronger because of this adjustment, which would weld together the old and the young as their differences were resolved through intellectual compromise.

Then followed an unusual citation of scripture in support of this proposition. The closing two verses of the last book of the Old Testament were read:

"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." (Mal. 4:5-6.)

### The prophet Elijah

No passage in scripture gives students of the Old Testament greater problems of interpretation than this one in the Book of Malachi regarding the sending of Elijah to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers. Who is the prophet Elijah who is to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord? Let me review some of the highlights of his life.

The first mention of Elijah in the record refers to him as being from Tishbeh of Gilead, east of the Jordan in the area of Galilee. The events with which he was associated occurred in the ninth century before the birth of Christ. This great prophet was one of the leaders in defending Jehovah as the true God of Israel against those who were advancing Baal worship. His life is associated with many miracles.

Elijah prophesied to King Ahab that there would be a drouth, and a drouth did come to the land. The prophet went to the east of Jordan by the brook Cherith. The brook provided him with water, and the Lord caused him to be fed by ravens morning and night. Because of the drouth, the brook dried up and he sought another refuge.

### Elijah and the widow

The Lord directed him to a poor widow who lived with her only son. Elijah found her at the gate of the city and asked for water and bread.

The widow answered: "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." (1 Kings 17: 12.)

Elijah told her to fear not, that the handful of meal and the cruse of oil would not diminish; and it did sustain them through the long drouth.

During this time the widow's son became ill and died, or was close to death. Elijah called upon the Lord, and the boy began to breathe again and was given his life.

Later the Lord appeared to Elijah and told him to go to King Ahab and the drouth would be broken. Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Tyre, where the god Baal was worshiped. She brought her religion with her, introduced Baalism to the Hebrews, and carried on an attack against the religion of the Hebrews and against Israel's God.

### The prophets of Baal

When Elijah went to King Ahab to tell him of the end of the drouth, Ahab accused him of causing trouble in Israel. Elijah charged Ahab with forsaking the commandments of the Lord and following Baal. He challenged the prophets of Baal, supported by Jezebel, to come to Mount Carmel and determine whether the Lord or Baal was God.

Ahab gathered Israel to the place, and Elijah stood alone against the 450 prophets of Baal while the people watched. The contest was to build two altars—one for the Lord and the other for Baal—and to place thereon sacrificial bullocks on unkindled wood. Whichever deity answered by fire

would be accepted as God. The 450 prophets commenced first. They called upon Baal from morning until noon but there was no answer. In their frenzy, they leaped about the altar and cut themselves with their knives and lancets till the blood gushed out, but still no answer.

### **Elijah's appeal**

Then came Elijah's turn. He called for barrels of water to be poured on the sacrifice he had prepared, and he said: ". . . Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

"Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

"Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." (1 Kings 18:36-39.)

The heavens turned black with clouds and wind, and torrential rains came and ended the drouth.

### **Encounter in the wilderness**

Jezebel became angry and threatened Elijah, and he fled south to Beersheba and into the wilderness of Sinai. His encounter with the Lord in the wilderness has become the theme that Mendelssohn put to music in the beautiful *Elijah Oratorio*.

On the mount he felt the power of the wind, the rocks of Sinai were broken to pieces, there was an earthquake and fire, and in the calm that

followed, the voice of the Lord was heard to say, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He answered, ". . . the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, . . . and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:9-10.) Two troops of soldiers were sent to capture him, but Elijah called down fire from heaven, and they were consumed.

Elijah, the great defender of Jehovah, and his friend Elisha walked together from Jericho to the Jordan. Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters. They divided, and the two crossed over on dry ground.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings 2:11.)

### **Mission of Elijah**

The story of Elijah is in the Old Testament and reference is made to him in the New Testament, but without further revelation we would be left in darkness as to his mission and the meaning of the promise stated by Malachi. The very first written revelation of this dispensation, being the statement of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, repeats almost the same words used by Malachi and indicates that Elijah was yet to come. Eight years later, a few days after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had finished praying together in the temple when a marvelous vision was manifested to them. Let me read just a few lines as recorded in the 110th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened."

The Lord appeared upon the breastwork of the pulpit and spoke to them. Moses appeared, then Elias, and the record continues:

"After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

"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." (D&C 110:1, 13-15.)

### **Gospel preached to spirits**

In centuries past many people have lived and died without knowing of the gospel. How will they be judged in the absence of this knowledge? Peter said that after Christ was crucified, "but quickened by the Spirit . . . he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." (1 Pet. 3:18-19.) Then he adds, "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Pet. 4:6.) Thus, those who die without knowledge of the gospel will have the opportunity to hear and accept it and to accept baptism.

### **Work for the dead**

Does it seem reasonable that persons who have lived upon the earth and died without the opportunity of baptism should be deprived throughout eternity? Is there anything unreasonable about the living performing the baptisms for the dead? Perhaps the greatest example of vi-

carious work for the dead is the Master himself. He gave his life as a vicarious atonement, that all who die shall live again and have life everlasting. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. In a similar way we can perform ordinances for those who did not have the opportunity to do them in lifetime.

Not only may baptisms be performed for the dead, but endowments; also sealings, by which wives become eternal companions to husbands and their children sealed to them as a family. The sealing of family units can be continued until the family of God is made perfect. This is the great work of the dispensation of the fulness of times, by which the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. The uniting and redemption of the family of God was the divine plan before the foundations of the earth were laid.

### **Appearance of Elijah**

I bear witness that the same prophet who was fed by the ravens, by the never-depleting handful of meal and cruse of oil, who brought back life to the widow's son, whose sacrifice was consumed by an unkindled fire, who was taken into heaven in a chariot of fire, has appeared in this day, as foretold by Malachi. He is turning the hearts of this and the past generations toward each other.

Prior to the building of temples in this dispensation and the appearance of Elijah, there was little interest in seeking out and identifying families of the past. Since temples have been built, genealogical interest in the world has increased at an accelerating rate. The gathering of hundreds of people to Salt Lake City, represent-

ing forty-five nations, for the World Conference on Records is a demonstration of this great interest.

Let me go back to the statements made by the speaker regarding modern youth trends. Could the words of Malachi mean that the mission of Elijah in the last days would be to resolve differences between parents and children, restore domestic tranquillity, and close the generation gap? Of course not. Revelation in this day has given us the true meaning. Let me read to you the words of Joseph Smith in answer to the question:

“. . . this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection. . . .” (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 252.)

May the spirit of Elijah burn deep into our hearts and turn us toward the temples, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Harold B. Lee

Thank you Elder Hunter. We express our appreciation for those who have addressed us in this excellent session of the conference this afternoon.

The Sunday School conference meeting will be held this evening at 7 o'clock in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. All Sunday School officers and

teachers and their families are invited to attend. We also recommend that all members of the priesthood who have Sunday School responsibilities be in attendance at this meeting.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Combined Relief Society Choruses of the Blackfoot, Pocatello, and Pocatello North Regions, with Sister Ellen Barnes conducting, and Robert Cundick at the organ.

On behalf of all who have listened to the singing during this session of the General Conference today, we express our appreciation and our sincere thanks to the members of this chorus for furnishing us with their inspirational music.

The Relief Society Chorus, with Sister Ellen Barnes conducting, and Elder Cundick at the organ, will now favor us with, "Old Things Are Done Away."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Paul S. Rose, former president of the Philippines Mission.

The general session of this conference will then be adjourned until 10 o'clock a.m. Saturday.

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The Relief Society Chorus rendered the number, "Old Things Are Done Away."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Paul S. Rose, former president of the Philippines Mission.

The conference was adjourned until Saturday morning at 10 o'clock.