

**NINETY-FOURTH
SEMI-ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

**of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints**

**Held in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**October 5, 6 and 7
1923**

*With a Full Report of
all the Discourses*

Published by the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

we have sat in the meetings of this conference and listened to the inspiring words of our beloved president and other speakers, and the witness is given to us that what they say is true, is a delusion and a snare.

For be it known that "Mormonism" rests upon the testimony that God gives to his children of its truthfulness. If you will do the work you shall know whether these men speak of God or whether they speak of themselves.

In humility and with all the earnestness of my soul I bear testimony that I know that the Angel Moroni came and revealed the Book of Mormon, that Joseph Smith was the instrument in the hands of God of establishing upon the earth God's Church, through which his gospel may be preached to all the world; and I bear witness of its truthfulness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, "Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Robert I. Burton, president of the Mt. Ogden stake of Zion.

The conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon meeting was opened at 2 o'clock, October 6, 1923. President Heber J. Grant presided and announced that the choir and congregation would sing "Come, come, ye Saints."

After the singing of the hymn, Elder Joseph R. Murdock, of the Wasatch stake of Zion, offered prayer.

A solo, "Be thou faithful unto death," was sung by Elihu Call.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

I am very glad, my brethren and sisters, that we have the amplifiers installed, and I hope they are in working order, for I have such a cold and hoarseness that but for these helps I fear I would not be able to make you all hear. I sincerely hope to be able to say something to you this afternoon which will be worthy of your hearing.

A PHASE OF THE ANGEL MORONI'S MESSAGE.

In the brief period of time which I have been invited to occupy this afternoon, I desire to speak upon that phase of the Angel Moroni's message to the boy Joseph Smith, which relates directly to the salvation for the dead, or as we commonly speak of it, genealogy and temple work. Genealogy and temple work go hand in hand. In both are seen the spirit of Elijah and the accomplishment of one would be impossible without the accomplishment of the other, that is to say, the temple work and salvation for our dead, would be impossible

of accomplishment without first having a knowledge, some genealogy, of our dead. I realize that there are many people who do not accept of the visitation of the Angel Moroni to the boy Joseph Smith as a truth, therefore I desire to read three verses from the Old Testament, which all good Christians claim to believe, and which bears upon this subject.

SCRIPTURE BEARING ON THE SUBJECT.

I will read the first, the fifth and the sixth verses of the fourth chapter of Malachi:

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly; shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

"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."

I doubt if there was any man living at the time of the visitation of the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith who could properly interpret this passage of scripture. There was very little information among men upon the earth at that time in regard to this very important principle of the salvation for the dead, and the visitation of the Angel Moroni and his message were the first word in this dispensation in regard to the matter. The angel, referring to this same subject, while addressing the boy Joseph said:

"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

THE INTERPRETATION.

An explanation of the meaning of these passages of scripture is given in the 128th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, and reads as follows:

"It is sufficient to know, in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also."

It would seem from the quotation made by the angel to Joseph that the earth would be wasted at the coming of our Lord, if we do not do this important work, if the hearts of the children be not, in

this dispensation, turned unto their fathers; which, interpreted by the Prophet Joseph means: if we do not consider our dead ancestors, those who have gone before, obtaining sufficient knowledge and genealogy concerning them that will enable us to go into the temples, builded for that purpose, and there perform this important work of baptism. But be it known, my brethren and sisters and friends, that not only is it necessary that our dead who have not had the opportunity in life of hearing and embracing the gospel shall have the opportunity of hearing it on the other side and shall have the privilege of baptism by proxy by their living friends, but it is necessary that every ordinance of the gospel that is necessary for the salvation of the living shall also be administered by proxy for the dead.

Some will say they do not believe in this proxy business. To me, one may as well say that he does not believe in the atonement which was wrought out by our Lord and Savior for the redemption of the human family; for that is certainly a work of proxy. He becomes the Savior and Redeemer of mankind. We become the recipients of the blessings of the atonement, so far as being redeemed from our individual sins is concerned, only when we have accepted him as such, and when we have accepted of his mission as the Redeemer and Savior of the world. So men are authorized to act for the Lord by authority given them, and do for their dead kindred, a proxy work; thus they may become Saviors of men. So that with those for whom the work shall be done properly, as the Lord has revealed it through his servant, the Prophet Joseph, when they accept of the work done, it becomes efficacious for their salvation.

RESPONSIBILITY UPON THE PERSON, THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

With regard to this expression: if it were not so the whole earth would be smitten, would be utterly wasted at his coming, it seems to me that this refers not only to the individual members of the Church, but to the Church as a whole, and not only to us, but to the people of the world. Elijah came in fulfilment of the prediction that he would come before the great and glorious coming of our Lord and Savior, and he conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, in the Kirtland temple, on the third day of April, 1836, the keys of the dispensation of the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers; and he told them on that occasion that by this they might know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord was nigh, even at our doors. Eighty-seven and one-half years have passed since that time. We are that much nearer the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and his coming is assured. Is the earth going to be wasted at his coming? I firmly believe from my experience and observation, and from what history tells us, that there has never been a time since the visitation of the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith, when there has been so much wickedness as now in the

world and so much destruction of life and property, all fulfilling the predictions of the prophets, being signs of the time of the coming of our Lord and Savior.

THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH.

When Elijah delivered his message, there went forth to the world a spirit, even the spirit of Elijah, which was seen in Great Britain, in the parliament of that great nation: for almost immediately, we learn from the history, they enacted laws making it obligatory upon the parish clerks and others in the subdivisions of the government of Great Britain that they keep correct records, records of births, records of deaths, records of marriages, etc., the very data that are required to enable us to perform the work for our dead in the temples of the Lord; and a place was designated for the safe keeping of these records as they became completed. In Great Britain, in other nations of Europe, and throughout the United States, from that time went forth a spirit and a desire among men to know of their kindred dead, such as had never been witnessed before, and genealogical societies were organized, and men and women of wealth and nobility have expended their fortunes and years of their time in searching for the very information that we desire and need in order to discharge ourselves of the obligations resting upon us concerning the dead, and we have now accessible all through the country, libraries containing thousands and thousands of printed histories of families and of branches and of counties and shires and parishes, and I think that the people of the world are doing their duty in this respect, perhaps as well as are the Latter-day Saints. We have builded temples at great cost and are maintaining them at great expense, and there are but a few of us who have been very active in looking after our kindred dead.

IMPORTANCE OF TEMPLE WORK.

The importance of this work was stated emphatically by the Prophet Joseph when he said that the Lord has never laid upon this people a greater responsibility than that of looking after their dead, which means, inquiring after them, learning of them, building temples and redeeming them by administering unto them the saving ordinances of the gospel.

The gospel is preached to the world; it is the poor of the world who are receiving the gospel. This work in the Church is being performed by the poor of the Church. Think it over, brethren and sisters, we have men of means, we have men who could well afford to inquire after their dead, make extended research, and could pay for proxy work in having that work done, and men, too, who are active in other religious lines of work, who seem never to have let this important question enter into their minds; who have never been active in obtaining genealogy and in doing temple work. My motive

is, in speaking these few words this afternoon, brethren and sisters, that I might inspire in the minds of some of my brethren and sisters who have been neglectful of this responsibility, a desire and a determination to take up this work, to learn where their responsibilities lie, and to discharge themselves faithfully of these responsibilities, while they have the opportunity.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK AT HOME.

Time will not permit me to extend my remarks upon this subject, which is one of the most glorious and most important, and many examples of faithfulness on the part of our people are worthy of the emulation of the whole. I would that all could know the sacrifices which some are making in these temples, and in obtaining a genealogy for their dead. Those who cannot go abroad to preach the gospel, who are physically disqualified, men who are wrapped up in business and professions, so that they cannot answer the call, have an opportunity here at home to do a work for which they are well adapted, where they can use their means to the very best advantage and accomplish just as great and glorious a work as if they were abroad in the world preaching the gospel. Will you do it, brethren and sisters? That is the question. Are we going to be as the world—hearers of the word and not doers of it, deceiving ourselves? I trust this will not be the case. God help us to discharge our duty faithfully, that the earth may not be wasted at his coming and that we may not be reproached when our life's work is ended, with having neglected our dead, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I feel very weak this afternoon, and I desire your assistance and the blessing of my heavenly Father that I may be able to say something that will be profitable to you.

GRATITUDE AND THANKS EXPRESSED

My soul is filled with a deep gratitude that I cannot express, for membership in this wonderful organization. I am thankful that my lot has been cast with this people, I am grateful that I was born of goodly parents, and that the environment of my life has been such that I have participated in the greatest blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon his children. While listening to the brethren who have addressed us, I have felt to pour out my soul in thanksgiving because of what we are enjoying. No other people upon the face of the earth have been honored as we have in having been given the knowledge of the gospel of our Lord. Think of belonging to a Church that has deposited with it the information and authority that is necessary for all humanity to possess before they can realize the purpose of their creation.