

One Hundred Twelfth
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Assembly Hall and Temple
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

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With Report of Discourses



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FIRST DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The second session of the Conference was held in the Assembly Hall Saturday afternoon, April 4, at 2 o'clock.

President Heber J. Grant was present and presided. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the meeting.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (Hymn Book, page 58).

Elder David Smith, President of the North Idaho Falls Stake, offered the opening prayer.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Now Let Us Rejoice" (Hymn Book, page 198).

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

BEFORE the Savior took leave of His disciples in Jerusalem He promised them that He would send the Holy Ghost after He had gone. That promise was fulfilled, as you know. The brethren and people had a wonderful pentecost.

The first temple built in this gospel dispensation was dedicated on the 27th of March, 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio. The Sunday following, on the 3rd of April, while the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were in the temple they had a wonderful manifestation. The Lord appeared to them; the veil was taken from their eyes; they saw Him and heard Him. Among other things, He accepted of the dedication of that house and the sacrifices made by the people who in their poverty had in a very short time erected the building and had it ready for dedication.

After this vision closed, Moses the prophet appeared to Joseph and Oliver, and conferred upon them the keys of the gathering of scattered Israel from the four quarters of the earth, and the return of the lost tribes from the north.

And when this vision closed, Elias, who lived in the days of Abraham, appeared and conferred upon them the keys of the Abrahamic dispensation,

saying that "in us and our seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed."

And then appeared Elijah, the prophet, who said he had come in fulfilment of the prediction of Malachi, saying that before the great and dreadful day of the Lord should come He would send Elijah the prophet to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest the whole world be smitten with a curse. Said he: "Therefore I commit unto you these keys, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is nigh, even at your doors."

This was a wonderful pentecostal occasion in this dispensation.

This conference is peculiar, and I suppose before it is over it will be a veritable pentecost. Not such as those had in the primitive Church and those in the early rise of this Church, perhaps. I sincerely hope, however, that the Spirit of God will be poured out upon us, and its power be made manifest, that we will all be satisfied and feel that it has surely enriched our souls to be in attendance at this conference.

In the time allotted to me to speak on this occasion, I have thought to speak upon a subject, the most glorious of all gospel subjects, in which is involved

one of the greatest, if not the greatest, responsibilities that God has placed upon us as a people, that of looking after our kindred dead.

I call your attention to the statements of the Prophet Joseph to the Saints, recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, and known as the 128th section. In the 17th verse of that section He speaks of baptism for the dead, and says: "This most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, namely, the baptism for the dead." And as you know, brethren, baptism and confirmation are necessary to man's salvation—the door into the kingdom. There are other sacred, saving ordinances of the gospel that we might say are on a par in necessity for men's salvation; they are for the living and for the dead. We are not called upon as members of the Church to do genealogical research and temple ordinance work—as we are called to go out into the world to preach the gospel, but we have the responsibility pertaining to our kindred dead, and we are urged to do our duty to them, as we are urged by those in authority, to attend to our other religious duties—the payment of our tithes and the keeping of the Word of Wisdom, the attending of our sacrament meetings, our quorum meetings, to our prayers, etc. This responsibility is one that the Lord has placed upon us. The Prophet Joseph has left on record this statement among his gems, *Compendium*, page 284:

The greatest responsibility in this world which the Lord has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.

To seek after our dead means to find them out by genealogical research, to obtain the information regarding them that will identify them from all other people bearing the same name. A perfect identification is to have the individual's full name, also the day, month, and year of his birth; the town, county, and state where he was born; the date of his death; the name of his father and mother; and, if it is a married man, his wife's name; and, if it is a married woman, her husband's name. We regard this as complete identification.

However, we do work for people where we are not able to obtain complete information. As you know, brethren, this information must be had concerning our dead before we can go into the temple and do the work for them. It places the principle of genealogical research, so far as our dead are concerned, on a par in importance with the temple work which we do for them. And when the Prophet says, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has placed upon us is to seek after our dead," it means the responsibility of finding them out by genealogical research and then going into the temple and receiving for them those saving ordinances.

You will notice that the 110th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, from which I have quoted, is an account of what we call the pentecost of this dispensation. An account is there given of Elijah's appearing and committing to Joseph and Oliver the keys of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. About the time of this manifestation—which was on the 3rd of April, 1836—the spirit of Elijah seemed to be abroad among the people of this world. I am told that the Parliament of Great Britain in that very year made provision for the keeping of certain records throughout the empire. Those records were to have the information that would identify the various individuals, just such information as we need in our temple work and in our genealogical research work—records of birth, of baptisms, of marriages, death, and burials. From about that time there has been among the people of the world a spirit and desire to know more about their ancestors than ever before. Men and women of intelligence and means are spending their means and time in genealogical research, and those family histories find their way into the genealogical libraries which have grown up all over the land in this and other countries, and are accessible to the Latter-day Saints.

The Genealogical Society of Utah has for years been gathering copies of

Saturday, April 4

First Day

records that are kept in other countries and they are accessible also to the Latter-day Saints here in the Genealogical Library of Utah in Salt Lake City.

So if the Lord has moved upon the minds and hearts of men and women not of the Church to gather this needed genealogical information, it is important that we do our part, and make use of that information. It is the work and the glory of God the Eternal Father to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, living and dead. He is dependent upon His living children here to assist Him, and particularly the Latter-day Saints.

I could tell you an experience of my own family, showing how the Lord moves upon the hearts of men and women in this Church to obtain the information that is necessary in order to do our duty to our kindred dead. And be it known, brethren, that not only has God laid this responsibility upon us, but it is one that is inherited. We will have to account to Him for the way we have done or neglected to do this important work in this Church. We will meet our kindred dead, and we will have to account to them also.

I often remark that we are indebted to our parents for our life, for our existence here upon the earth, for the good name that we have inherited. The Bible tells us a good name is more to be desired than great riches. It certainly is a valuable asset in a man's life. If we are indebted to our parents for all that we have inherited—good name and attributes and qualities of high degree and our life of existence here—we are indebted to our grandparents who gave us those parents; to our great-grandparents who gave us grandparents, and so you may go back as far as you can trace. We are indebted to our ancestors, not just our parents, for that which we have inherited, and among them no doubt are thousands of God's noble sons and daughters who have lived their lives here upon the earth the best they knew how, perhaps, and served the Lord according to their understanding of what is right and proper and have gone to the other side. They will hear the gospel taught while

they are in the spirit; the gospel is for all men, the living and the dead. The scriptures tell us that "until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law, and where there is no law there is no judgment; where there is no judgment there is no condemnation." And in justice every man must be taught the gospel here or hereafter and the Lord has graciously made provision to that end.

Now when we go on to the other side what kind of accounting will we have to make to our kindred ancestry to whom we are so much indebted? Suppose we have not gone out of our way to obtain knowledge of them—will it be sufficient justification on our part if we have to say that we did not know them? I am sure it would bring a reproach from them, and they might very properly say that "if you did not think enough of us to make a search to find us out and do this work for our salvation and progress, on whom may we depend? Have you sons and daughters or brothers and sisters who are going to look after us? Where are our hopes? How long will we have to be in this condition?"

I wonder, brethren, leaders in Israel, shepherds of the flock, if we have thought this thing over seriously, and if we have taught it to the people and are continuing to teach it and to set an example before them?

I want you to know the attitude of our present President upon this important subject. This I take from *The Improvement Era* of November, 1941. President Grant said:

To my mind one of the greatest and grandest and the most glorious of all the labors that anyone can be engaged in is laboring for the salvation of the souls of their loved ones, their ancestors who have gone before, who had not the privilege of listening to the gospel and embracing it.

President Grant believes that we should be doers of the word and not hearers of it only, deceiving ourselves. He has set us a wonderful example himself going through the temple for the dead, and employing others to as-

sist him, and it is perfectly legitimate if we cannot go ourselves—you men are busy men, it may be that you cannot go to the temple as frequently as you would like—there are poor men in this Church who are perfectly willing to represent you in doing this endowment work, and be it known that all the other temple work will be done for you gratuitously by the workers at the temples if you desire them to do so. After you obtain the genealogical information and present it at the temple, just the endowment work is exacted from you. Of course if you can do all the other work, it will be so much better; we cannot expect poor people to do the endowment work for us for nothing. For fifty cents we can employ a poor man—I say poor, one whose finances are such that he is willing to do that work for us, provide his own temple clothing and keep it clean and for the price named.

Some person has put into the mouth of the Savior these words:

Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor and Me.

In other words, we kill three birds with one stone. Here is an opportunity to kill four birds with one stone: I employ a man to do this work for me, I benefit myself. I am helping one who

is needing help—the living—and redeeming my dead. By redeeming the dead I am helping my Father in heaven and His Son Jesus Christ—a glorious work.

Because of the greatness of the responsibility of it, brethren, the blessing is correspondingly great, if we discharge ourselves faithfully of the responsibility; and I can say the consequences of entire neglect of this responsibility are correspondingly great.

You know how it was with the rich man, according to the parable by the Savior, who neglected to feed the poor man Lazarus. When the rich man died, he was consigned to hell and torment. I want to tell you we are rich in the things of eternal life; we know the way, we have received the saving ordinances. Our dead kindred are there in abject poverty. If we do not minister unto their needs, what may we hope for when we come to judgment before the Lord? I have said we will have to account to him. We have accepted this responsibility, and we will have to account to our kindred dead. I would have you and myself so to live and to labor and discharge ourselves of these responsibilities that there will be no disappointment on our part, and no disappointment on the part of our kindred dead. May the Lord help us to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

SINCE the beginning of this Conference I have had a number of thoughts and I would like to add a few words along the line that was presented by Brother Richards this afternoon.

In His justice the Lord grants every man an opportunity of salvation. If he does not get that opportunity here, provision is made for him to hear and accept, if he will, the gospel in the spirit world. We are not going to save—perhaps I ought to say exalt, because usually when we use that term salvation we mean exaltation—we are

not going to exalt all the inhabitants of this earth, and they are not all going to find a place in the celestial kingdom of God—very few in fact of the great mass of humanity will reach exaltation. We reach that conclusion based upon the words of the prophets and the words of our Savior himself:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)