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THE LAW OF ADOPTION.

Discourses delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday morning, April 8, 1894, by

PRESIDENTS WILFORD WOODRUFF and GEORGE Q. CANNON

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

I feel thankful for the privilege of meeting with so many of the Latter-day Saints this morning. In order to present my position before the Saints I wish to say that I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints over sixty years, a member of the Quorum of the Apostles fifty-five years, and the President of the Church for a short time. During all these years, and in all my travels, I have never seen a moment when I have had the power to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ or to administer in any of the ordinances of the House of the Lord, acceptably to God or to myself, only by the assistance of the Holy Ghost; and I do not know of any other man that could ever do this. Even the Son of God, in referring to His work, said: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." So it has been with all the prophets and patriarchs in every age of the world; they have had to be assisted by the power of God. I occupy that position today before this assembly. Therefore, as the Lord commanded us not to speak only as we are moved upon by the Holy Ghost, I desire that, and in order to obtain it I want the prayers and faith of the Latter-day Saints.

I have some things resting upon me that I wish to present before the Latter-day Saints, and in order to do this I will call upon President George Q. Cannon to read from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants concerning the subject which I wish to speak upon.

[President Cannon read from sec. 128, as follows:

It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth, and binds in heaven. Nevertheless in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation of the Priesthood to any man by actual revelation, or any set of men, this power has always been given. Hence, whatsoever those men did in authority, in the

name of the Lord, and did it truly and faithfully, and kept a proper and faithful record of the same, it became a law on earth and in heaven, and could not be annulled, according to the decrees of the great Jehovah. This is a faithful saying! Who can hear it?

And again, for the precedent, Matthew xvi. 18, 19. "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given, there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.

Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life. The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other. To be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead.

Consequently the baptismal font was instituted as a simile of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead; and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another; that which is earthly conforming to that which is heavenly, as Paul hath declared, 1 Corinthians xv. 46, 47 and 48.

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord, from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And as are the records on the earth in relation to your dead, which are truly made out, so also are the records in heaven. This, therefore, is the sealing and binding power, and, in one sense of the word, the keys of the kingdom which consist in the key of knowledge.

And now, my dearly beloved brethren and

sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead, and the living, that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary, and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers "that they without us cannot be made perfect;" neither can we without our dead be made perfect.

And now, in relation to the baptism for the dead, I will give you another quotation of Paul, 1 Corinthians xv. 29, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all; why are they then baptized for the dead?"

And again, in connection with this quotation, I will give you a quotation from one of the prophets, who had his eye fixed on the restoration of the Priesthood, the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an especial manner this; most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, viz., the baptism for the dead; for Malachi says, last chapter, verses 5th and 6th, "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 might have rendered a plainer translation to this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purpose as it stands. 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; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times; which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time; and not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? "A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy; how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things; and that say unto Zion, behold! thy God reigneth. As the dews of Carmel, so shall the knowledge of God descend upon them."

And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophecies—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca county, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book. The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light. The voice of Peter, James and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the