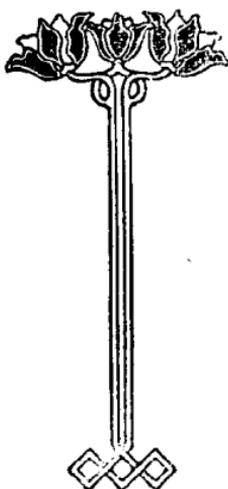


THE PLACE OF
GENEALOGY
IN THE
PLAN OF SALVATION

INSTITUTE OF RELIGION



A PAPER READ BY NEPHI ANDERSON AT THE QUARTERLY
MEETING OF THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH,
IN THE ASSEMBLY HALL, SALT LAKE CITY,
OCTOBER 6, 1911

The Place of Genealogy in the Plan of Salvation.

Every well-informed, consistent Latter-day Saint should believe in genealogy as much as he believes in faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins; and this belief should be manifested in works, the same as belief in baptism, tithing or any other gospel principle is shown to be genuine by its fulfillment in actual practice. This statement, that every Latter-day Saint should be a genealogist, may, at first thought, seem a little extreme. It will be necessary, therefore, to establish the proposition by briefly pointing out what the Latter-day Saints believe regarding the salvation of the human race.

Summarized, it is this: God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man; and this is accomplished through the operations of eternal law. "All kingdoms have a law given," says the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in these conditions are not justified." On the other hand, all beings are redeemed, justified, and perfected by obedience to the law given for their particular time, place, and condition.

The law by which all human beings who tabernacle on this earth may be justified and perfected was formulated in the heavens before this world was. The Plan of Salvation for the human race was there proclaimed, and we know it by the term, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The primary and fundamental principles of this plan or gospel are summarized by a recent writer as follows:

“First: Faith in God the Father, in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. We must accept them as the presiding authority in the heavens, who govern and control all things, who are omnipotent, just and true.

“Second: We must accept the infinite atonement of Christ, believing that he is the Redeemer of the world, both from Adam's transgression and from our individual sins on condition of our repentance.

“Third: We must repent of all our sins, giving our hearts to God, with the full intent of serving him.

“Fourth: We must be baptized in water for the remission of our sins, by one who is called of God and clothed with divine authority to administer in the ordinances of the gospel.

“Fifth: We must have the hands of those holding authority placed upon our heads, and through their ministration receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Truth and Prophecy that guides us in all truth.

“Sixth: We must be willing to serve the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength, keeping his commandments even unto the end.

“Upon these laws, salvation is based, and the promised blessings are unto all men.”

These principles being fundamental cannot be changed or annulled. They are co-equal and all-important. None of them can be omitted from the perfect plan. They are equally binding on all men, who are subject to the law at all times, from the days of Adam to the winding-up scene.

But it will readily be seen that many generations of men have not received this law of the gospel among them. Through one cause or another, not always known to us, ignorance of the gospel of Jesus Christ has prevailed among many nations and people. The question then naturally arises, What about those who have not received the gospel in this life? Not having known the law, how can these be justified? This problem has vexed the religious world for centuries. Christ and His apostles preached the universality of the gospel, yet there were millions who did not receive it. Were they lost? Such a thought was terrible, and yet some religious teachers advo-

cated it, choosing the irrevocableness of God's law rather than His mercy and justice, when, to them, there seemed a conflict or contradiction. They pointed out the fact which the Master had proclaimed that "a man must be born of water and of the spirit" before he can enter the kingdom. If this is true, they reasoned, then those not born of water are not, neither can be in the kingdom, for in this life only is water with which to be born anew, and this life only is there time for repentance.

These theologians stumbled, and continued to stumble, because they have the half truth only. They are right in taking the plain statement of the Savior that baptism is essential to salvation, but they err in not knowing that the gospel can be preached to those called the dead—those of the human race who have laid down the mortal body, and who dwell in the great world of spirits. How dense was the darkness of apostasy may be seen by what was taught regarding those who had died unsaved. Here is one sample only, taken from the writings of Jonathan Edwards:

"The Lord will trample them under his feet with inexpressible fierceness. He will crush their blood out and make it fly, so that it will sprinkle his garments and stain all his raiment; * * * In some heathen countries the manner of disposing of dead bodies is to dig a pit and put in it a great quantity of fuel, to put the dead bodies on the pile and set it on fire. This is some image of the burning of dead souls in hell. * * * The whole world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day or night. billows of fire continually rolling over their heads. They shall be forever full of quick sense; their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins, and their vitals shall be forever full of glowing, melting fire, and also they shall be eternally full of the most lively sense to feel the torment. * * * The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever; it will really make their happiness the greater, it will give them a more lively relish of it—oh, it will make them sensible how happy they are."

Such horrible teachings seem inexcusable in the light of

the scriptures. Scholars, such as these teachers of terror claimed to be, should have known better. They had the clear teaching of the apostle Peter that the gospel was preached to those that were dead, and they also had Paul's declaration that there were those who were baptized for the dead. The early Christians had a knowledge of this truth. There is an interesting legend handed down from those times, based on the teachings of Peter, that Christ, "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." This legend is called the "Gospel of Nicodemus." Here is a synopsis of it, taken from Plumtree's "The Spirits in Prison":

"Karinus and Leucius, two sons of Simeon, were among those who had arisen from their graves at the time of the Resurrection, and had appeared to many. (Matt. 27:57.) They tell the tale of what they had seen and heard in the world of the dead. They were with their fathers in the thick darkness, when suddenly there shone upon them a bright light as of the sun. Adam and the patriarchs and the prophets exalted at its coming. Isaiah knew it to be the light that should shine upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death. Simeon saw that it was the light to lighten the Gentiles, over which he had rejoiced. The Baptist, doing also there the work of a fore-runner, came to prepare the way, and to announce the coming of the Son of God. Seth narrated how Michael the Archangel had told him, as he prayed at the gates of Paradise, that one day, after five thousand five hundred years, the Son of God would come to lead his father Adam into Paradise, and to the tree of mercy.

Meantime, Hades (here personified as an actor in the drama) and Satan held counsel with each other, and were full of fear. He who had rescued so many of their victims upon earth, who had raised Lazarus from the grave, was now about to invade their kingdom, and to free all who were shut up in prison bound with the chain of their sins. And, as they spoke, there was a cry as of thunder: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Hades saught in vain to close the

gates and to set fast the bars. David and Isaiah uttered aloud the prophecies in which they had foretold this victory. Death and Hades trembled, and owned themselves conquered. They saw that One had come to set free those who were fast bound with the evils of their natures, to shed light on those who were blinded by the thick darkness of their sins. Hades and Satan wearied themselves in vain murmurings and recriminations. Adam and his children were rescued from the power of Hades; Satan and his hosts were left to take their places. Then the Lord stretched forth His hand and said, "Come unto me all my Saints who have my image and similitude." Adam and the Saints rose up from Hades with psalms of jubilant thanksgiving; prophets burst out into cries of joy. Michael the Archangel led them all within the gates of Paradise. There they were met by Enoch and Elijah, who had not tasted death, and were kept there until they should return to earth before the coming of Antichrist. There, too, was the repentant robber, bearing on his shoulders the cross to which he owed his entrance within the gates. The cross on which the redemption of mankind had been achieved was left, according to another version of the legend, in Hades itself, as a perpetual witness of the victory thus gained, that the ministers of Death and Hades might not have power to retain any one whom the Lord had pardoned."

The Fathers and the Reformers were divided on the question whether or not there is hope for the unconverted dead. Augustine, holding to the absolute necessity of baptism as a condition of salvation, held out no hope for those who had died unbaptized. Calvin carried this doctrine further, in that he applied it to infants also. Others were equally certain that in this life only there is salvation. On the other hand, the "Larger Hope" had advocates even among the early Fathers. Origen, who lived in the second century, taught a universal restoration, saying that when each sinner shall have received the penalty of his sins, that God will, through Christ, lead the whole universe to one end. Later, this doctrine was condemned by the Church of England, but later again declared not contrary to her teachings. Prominent among the modern English divines

who held out hope for the dead was Fredrick W. Farrar, Dean of Canterbury. He delivered five sermons in Westminster Abbey on "Eternal Hope," which have had wide publicity.

These good men have done well, but they have not gone far enough. The question still remains to be answered, What about the saving ordinances of the gospel? If the gospel is preached to the dead, is it all preached, or only a part? Surely, faith is taught, and repentance. But what about baptism?

And here is where the world lay in darkness until the Lord revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith the principle of salvation for the dead. Then the light burst forth, and perplexing questions were answered. The gospel is preached in the spirit world—the gospel in its completeness, including baptism in water for the remission of sins. The living on the earth may be baptized for the dead; and if the dead exercise faith and repentance, the earthly vicarious work will be credited to them as if they had done it themselves. Here, then, is harmony between the declaration of Jesus to Nicodemus (John 3:3-6), and Paul's reference to baptism for the dead. (1 Cor. 15:29).

It was on the 21st of September, 1823, that the angel Moroni announced the speedy restoration of these truths; and on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, Elijah the prophet delivered the keys pertaining to the salvation of the dead to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The time had come. The hearts of the fathers should turn to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse.

Joseph received line upon line regarding his subject until the Nauvoo Temple was ready for ordinance work. He had a clear understanding of this restored principle. His later years were taken up with it. When in exile because of enemies he wrote to the Church on the subject. Here are some things he said:

"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.' "

"It is sufficient to know * * * 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 it 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.'" (Doc. & Cov. 128:15, 18.)

At another time Joseph said: "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead." Again, "This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation." Also, "The Saints have not too much time to save and redeem their dead, and gather together their living relatives before the earth will be smitten."

What then are the principles underlying this doctrine of salvation for the dead? These at least may be named: First, that every soul, to be saved, must come under the unchanging law of the gospel. Second, that the whole race must be bound together into one complete chain. There must be a "welding link" between the fathers and the children. The hearts of the fathers and the children must be turned to each other. The

salvation of the fathers is necessary to our salvation. We cannot go alone, unconnected, into the kingdom of our Father. Note again the wording of the angel's message: The tie that shall bind together the human race is not of cold compulsion, but **hearts** shall form the links from father to son from the first man to the last. How grand is the thought! Love, the eternal Father-love and Mother-love of Deity is the power that shall link together the human race!

And now, what has all this to do with genealogy? I hope the answer is already apparent. This welding together, link upon link, of the families of the earth can only be done by getting the names of the individuals composing these families with certain facts regarding them, by which they can be identified—dates of birth, and of death, where they lived, and to whom they were related. With these facts secured, proper records can be made, and the binding together can be accomplished, the work being done in the temples of the Lord, the living for themselves as well as for the dead.

This work belongs to the *Latter-day Saints*. It is a part of the restored gospel which we have accepted. The finding of these names with the proper data accompanying is the work of the genealogist. Has not the opening statement been proved true, that every Latter-day Saint ought to be a practical genealogist?

As the Lord prepared this land to be a land of liberty for the establishing of His Church and Kingdom, so has the Lord put into the hearts of the children of men to do preparatory work for this salvation for the dead. The hearts of the children have been turned to their fathers to a wonderful degree. Previous to the revelations of God to Joseph Smith, there was very little interest taken in genealogical matters; but shortly afterwards there was an awakening. In the year 1844 (about the time when baptism for the dead was first being performed) the first genealogical society was organized in this country at Boston, Mass. It is the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, and is yet in a flourishing condition. From that beginning, many genealogical societies have been organized, both in this country and Great Britain. These societies have for

their object the collecting, preserving, and publishing of the records of the past, both as pertains to towns and cities as well as families. The Boston society publishes a magazine which is now in its sixty-fifth year. This magazine is now so valuable that a complete set has been sold for as high as \$400, and a single volume for \$75. The librarian of this society, answering some questions which I asked him, says in a letter dated August 29, last:

“No one knows how many volumes of genealogy we have in our library. We have never taken the trouble to ascertain either how many volumes of genealogy or how many titles. Our chief concern has been to secure everything possible in this line in order that we might show any American genealogy called for. We are striving to make this the court of last resort. We have paid prices ranging from \$5 to \$150 each for pamphlets and broadsides which really have but little use except to make our collections complete. As to this library's rank, it is unquestionably first of its kind anywhere, for three reasons: first, its completeness in printed works; second, its manuscript collections; third, its duplicate copies.”

The librarian of the Newberry Library of Chicago tells me that they have in that library about 6,000 volumes upon genealogy proper, besides about 3,000 volumes of town history, many of which contain genealogical matter; and about 600 volumes on heraldry and peerage. They have a wonderfully complete index in this library which contains approximately 1,000,000 names. The Library of Congress contains about 4,500 genealogical volumes, besides a large number of works bearing on genealogical matters.

The first American work on genealogy was published in 1771. The second in 1787. The third in 1813. In 1874 a total of 400 genealogical works was listed. From that time to the present this class of publications has greatly increased. Every year sees a large number added to the list. The New England society reported in 1905 that it had been instrumental in having printed the vital records of 37 towns in the state of Massachusetts, and this good work is still going on. Other American societies are active gathering, preserving, and publishing

genealogical matters. Thousands of individuals have been moved upon to spend much money and years of time to gather their family records and issue them in printed form.

A tidal wave of ancestry-searching has swept over the country. Periodicals have sprung up which confine themselves exclusively to genealogy. Newspapers are devoting departments to it.

Librarians and the custodians of public records bear record of this great movement. The libraries have become wonderfully popular, thronged by multitudes who have enrolled themselves in the army of amateur genealogists.

“What is the subtle attraction which draw these multitudes—the fascination which lures so many into genealogical research?” asks a recent writer on the subject.

This awakening is not confined to the United States. In every nation where the blood of Israel has been found more abundantly, the hearts of the children have been turned to their fathers. Germany, Holland, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries have become interested in gathering and preserving the records of the past, though not very much, as yet, has been published. In Great Britain, however, the interest is as keen and as widespread as in the United States. George Minns, the agent of the Utah Genealogical Society in Great Britain, recently wrote this:

“There is quite a busy hum in the genealogical hive at the present time, which has been steadily increasing since I first started on my career as record searcher, and there is evidence of its continuing to increase to indefinite proportions as time goes on. I have observed the gradual development of genealogical enterprises with the deepest interest; have seen the birth of many county and other societies. All these have the same object in view, namely, to bring to light the documents now more or less obscure, to preserve their valuable contents from possible loss through injury or natural decay; and to print, index, and disseminate the annals of the past.

“The result of all this labor facilitates genealogical research immensely. It is a great and a good work. Owing to the many hundreds of thousands of unarranged documents

dispersed through the country, and the lack of adequate financial support, it will require many years to accomplish the printing and indexing of them all. Many as the difficulties are, there are a great number of persons of both sexes spending their time, talents, energy and means to further the cause. A good many of the old records, now hidden away in the nooks and corners of the "Old Country," are either practically unknown or unsuspected of having anything of interest to impart."

In the providences of the Lord the time came for some organization to be effected that would help the Latter-day Saints in their important work of searching after their dead; therefore, on Tuesday, November 13, 1894, at a meeting held in the Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, the Genealogical Society of Utah was organized. A document had been prepared and signed by the following: Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, John Nicholson, James H. Anderson, Amos Milton Musser, Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, James B. Walkley, Abraham H. Cannon, George Reynolds, John Jaques, and Duncan M. McAllister. The document stated:

"We, the undersigned, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby associate ourselves together in an organization to be known by the name and style of 'The Genealogical Society of Utah,' the purposes of which are benevolent, educational and religious—pecuniary profit not being the object; benevolent in collecting, compiling, establishing and maintaining a genealogical library for the use and benefit of its members and others; educational in disseminating information regarding genealogical matters; religious in acquiring records of deceased persons in connection with ordinances of the religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as that religion is understood in the doctrines and discipline of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and set forth in the revelations of God; said association to be conducted in harmony with the rules and order of said Church."

Church Historian, Franklin D. Richards, tendered the large upper room in the Historian's Building for the use of the Society, which it still occupies.

The Society's growth was slow in the beginning, but within the past few years it has developed wonderfully, owing to the keen interest and active work of its officers and committee workers. In 1895 the Society had 28 life and 20 annual members. In the library were deposited about 100 volumes. Up to date there have been 738 life and 1,712 annual members admitted to the Society. A few of these life members have, of course, died, and perhaps one-fourth of the annual members have at the present date not renewed their membership; but these figures will give an idea of the growth of the Society. There are now 2,000 volumes of genealogical works in the library. These consist largely of American and English family history, vital records, parish registers, town and county histories, bound volumes of genealogical magazines, including a complete set of New England Historical and Genealogical Record, charts, and other publications bearing on the subject of genealogy and history. A beginning has been made in Scandinavian, German, Dutch, French, and Italian genealogies, with prospects of substantial additions to these sections. The library is open to members each week from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m., excepting Saturday, when it closes at 1 o'clock. A librarian is present to help beginners in the work. The membership fees of the Society are: life membership, \$10, with two years in which to pay it; and annual membership, which costs \$2 the first year and \$1 yearly thereafter.

This, then, is the Society that presents itself before the Latter-day Saints for their encouragement and support. The belief of our people on the subject of salvation for the dead makes it of the utmost importance that every printed record of the dead, dealing with names, dates, and relationships, ought to be accessible to the Latter-day Saints. Because of the limited demand for such books, usually no more than 150 copies are printed. This makes the books costly—and yet we ought to have them. Every year an ever-increasing number of such books are being printed. The British parish register societies are issuing two or three volumes each year. The Genealogical Society of Utah subscribes for all such books as soon as they are issued. Books are also being printed in foreign nations.

and we ought to have all of these, as fast as they come from the press. But this takes money, hence the need for the membership fees.

The question is frequently asked, What advantage will come to me by my becoming a member of the Genealogical Society? It is yet human to want to know what the personal gain will be by an investment in time or means. Some say they cannot use the library because they do not live in Salt Lake City. Others excuse themselves by the fact that there are no or few books in the library containing their family names.

Although many have obtained thousands of names from our books, and there are thousands of names yet awaiting the searcher, yet no one can be assured that his family name or genealogy can be found in the records of the library. But what of that? Do the Saints ask to be assured before they will accept a call to go on a mission that they shall reach some of their own kin with the gospel? In any good work of the Church, does it matter just who are benefited? All selfishness is eliminated from the work for the dead. One soul is as precious as another, and all should have an equal chance for salvation. What if those from a distance cannot, at present, make personal use of the library. By their membership support they are giving opportunity to someone else. And who shall say who is doing more, he who does the work or he who makes it possible. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." The whole human race is bound together by the relationship of blood, and kinship with God; therefore no good deed can be done to or in behalf of any fellow being but that will become part of the great whole of good which is to save the race.

The Genealogical Society publishes the "Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine" to assist in its work. The magazine is exchanged with many others of its kind, and many valuable books are obtained by review notices in its columns. Special attention is called to the volume for 1912, because, besides the many articles of general and family history, there will be published a series of lessons in genealogy written es-

pecially for the Society by Sister Susa Young Gates. Sister Gates has for some years been instructor in classes for the study of genealogy, and these lessons are an outgrowth of her work. They will be invaluable to all who wish to make a beginning in the work, as they are practical and helpful.

In conclusion, let me suggest the future of this work. I see the records of the dead and their histories gathered from every nation under heaven to one great central library in Zion—the largest and best equipped for its particular work in the world. Branch libraries may be established in the nations, but in Zion will be the records of last resort and final authority. Trained genealogists will find constant work in all nations having unpublished records, searching among the archives for families and family connections. Then, as temples multiply, and the work enlarges to its ultimate proportions, this Society, or some organization growing out of this Society, will have in its care some elaborate, but perfect system of exact registration and checking, so that the work in the temples may be conducted without confusion or duplication. And so throughout the years, reaching into the Millennium of peace, this work of salvation will go on, until every worthy soul that can be found from earthly records will have been searched out and officiated for; and then the unseen world will come to our aid, the broken links will be joined, the tangled threads will be placed in order, and the purposes of God in placing salvation within the reach of all will have been consummated.

We live in the day of small beginnings, as far as this work is concerned. We are still pioneers. We are but helping to lay the foundation of the "Marvelous work and a wonder that is about to come forth among the children of men." And now, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Doc. & Cov. 12:19-24): "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; 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! * * * *

"Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go

forward, and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory. Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceeding glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free. * *

“Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand, and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth; for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us therefore, as a Church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.”

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF UTAH

Organized November 13, 1894

Anton H. Lund, President; Charles W. Penrose, Vice President; Joseph F. Smith, Jr., Secy. and Treas.; Joseph Christenson, Librarian; Lillian Cameron, Assistant Librarian.

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