

## ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Dear brethren, fellow-workers in the cause of Christ, I pray that I may be guided by the good spirit that has been with us throughout this day in the few words I may say.

I should like to comment on the theme which was placed before us by President Clawson. This conference coincides, so it happens, with the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the great Salt Lake Temple. That beautiful edifice, made of granite and lifting its spires heavenward, is an evidence of the willingness of the Latter-day Saints to yield obedience to the will of God, and to sacrifice in behalf of His cause.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEMPLE WORK

The work done in the temples of the Lord represents the culmination of the obligations, privileges and blessings of the Priesthood. No man has completed—nor a woman with him—the Priesthood cycle until he has received the blessings that the temple has to offer.

It is sometimes thought that the work done in the temples is for the aged, and decrepit. Temple work is, primarily I was about to say, for those engaged in the active affairs of life, for those who are in the midst of life's battle, the young and the middle-aged. Perhaps they need it most. Certainly, it is quite as much for these as for those who seek refuge in their old age in the blessings of the temple.

Work in the temples is also for the dead. That we all know. Imbedded in the temple ceremonies and endowment is one of the most glorious of all the principles of truth given in this day—the principle of universal salvation. We are all the children of God, His very children; and He desires to bring all of us back into His presence, into His kingdom. He has provided means by which this may be done. He has no favorites, except as we ourselves by our imperfect living may defeat His desire. That is one of the great doctrines of the Church; unique and peculiar to this people. It is a challenging doctrine, that though a man may fail to hear the gospel upon earth, though he may fail, when he hears it, to comprehend it, he may yet have the opportunity after the grave, after this life is over, to participate in the blessings of the gospel, and to win his place in the kingdom of God.

It is a marvelous and comforting thought that there is hope beyond the grave. Millions have died in sorrow, and those who have been left behind have sorrowed and suffered, because they have failed to understand this law, one of the fundamental, basic principles of the gospel.

Temple work is very important. The Prophet Joseph Smith is reported to have said—it is so recorded and printed—that there is no more important duty resting upon the Latter-day Saints than to do the work for which we have erected temples. It is interesting to remember that in the Doctrine and Covenants, the collection of some of the revelations given by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the oldest revelation, therefore really the first, deals almost wholly with the subject of salvation

for the dead. It is a significant fact of history, also, that Brigham Young had been in this valley only four days when he came to a spot a few feet from where we are meeting today, in the midst of the sagebrush, and placed his cane in the ground, saying: "Here we shall build a temple to the Most High." The pioneers were hungry and weary; they needed food and rest; a hostile desert looked them in the face; yet in the midst of such physical requirements they turned first to the building of temples and to the spiritual food and strength that the temples provide.

Sometimes we forget the greatness of this work. It is a glorious thought that you and I, ordinary men, may do work upon earth that will be, is, recognized in heaven; that we may be as saviors to those who have gone before us into the unseen world. The Lord came upon earth and, in our behalf, in behalf of the whole race of God's children, did work which will bring us eternal life and joy and blessings. So, in a humbler manner may we, each one of us, do work for the dead that will bless them eternally, if they accept our service. We, also, may become saviors—"saviors on Mount Zion." That is a glorious thought that should remain in the minds of Latter-day Saints. It certifies to the claim that mankind are equally the children of God. It extends the doctrine of brotherhood to the whole human race.

#### LOVE IS SHOWN BY SACRIFICE

The Savior gave of Himself, gave His very life that we might live. To sacrifice that others might be blessed was His word, His work, His life. Sacrifice is the evidence of true love. Without sacrifice love is not manifest. Without sacrifice there is no real love, or kindness, the kindness suggested in the splendid theme discussed by Bishop Ashton. We love no one unless we sacrifice for him. We can measure the degree of love that we possess for any man or cause, by the sacrifice we make for him or it.

As the Lord gave His life to prove His love for His brethren and sisters, the human race, we may show the spirit of love more vigorously than we have done if we will make the small sacrifices necessary to seek out our genealogies, to spend time and money for the work, to take time to go to the temple ourselves for the dead. All such service may entail sacrifice, but sacrifice lifts us toward the likeness of God, the likeness of our Elder Brother Jesus Christ. If we Latter-day Saints have any great ideal, it is that of our Elder Brother. All that we strive for, and all that we have fought for, and all that we pray for, is to become more and more like Him as our days and years increase. As He gave His life, unselfishly for us, so each of us, extending the open door of salvation to the dead, most of whom are but names to us, may then by our unselfishness claim in very deed to be followers of Christ.

#### POWER AND STRENGTH CAN COME FROM UNSEEN WORLD

Temple work, in form and substance, reflects the fundamental principles and thoughts belonging to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must dig deeply to taste the sweetness of the gospel. We cannot merely

move about on the surface to secure the full gift of the Lord's plan of salvation. Deep down in the eternal realities, of which temple work is one, lies the real meaning, message, and blessing of the gospel.

These are trying days, in which Satan rages, at home and abroad, hard days, evil and ugly days. We stand helpless as it seems before them. We need help. We need strength. We need guidance. Perhaps if we would do our work in behalf of those of the unseen world who hunger and pray for the work we can do for them, the unseen world would in return give us help in this day of our urgent need. There are more in that other world than there are here. There is more power and strength there than we have here upon this earth. We have but a trifle, and that trifle is taken from the immeasurable power of God. We shall make no mistake in becoming collaborators in the Lord's mighty work for human redemption.

So my message to you, my brethren, the leaders of Israel, is that in performing our many duties, we remember to give a good share of our time and thought and energy to the work for which this great Salt Lake Temple, and the other temples, were erected.

The story of the rising of the Salt Lake Temple, round by round, in the midst of poverty and hardship, and under the unspeakable persecution of our people, is one that will never be forgotten by the Latter-day Saints. It will rise to become an epic of man's devotion to truth. It should be a great inspiration for us in our day. We do not want easy days; we want days, no matter how hard they may be, that lead us into the likeness of our Brother, Jesus Christ, and into His presence, and His Father's.

God bless us and prosper us in our work, and make us capable to do the work which has been placed upon us, I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER NICHOLAS G. SMITH

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren, we have had two glorious sessions. Kindness seems to be the theme. I thought as Bishop Ashton was pleading for more kindness, how fitting; and that I would like to tell something that happened to me just three weeks ago today. I was in Los Angeles without an appointment, and consequently wended my way over to the Hollywood Ward. As I came up to the door, a kind, affable man extended his hand in greeting, and said:

#### A WARM WELCOME

"You are welcome here. Come in." It was not a hard thing to go into that chapel. After the opening exercises, I went with one of the classes, and the teacher had sort of a "free for all" discussion. It seemed that he was drawing out the class members as to their attitude and feelings. He asked them of their difficulties, the trials they were having, and how they overcame them.