

Friday, April 5

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There will be on the one hand those who are servants, who are ministering angels; there will be on the other hand exalted and glorified personages. The difference between these two categories—the one on the one hand, and the other on the other—the difference is the continuation of the family unit in eternity. By definition and in its nature, exaltation consists in the continuation of the family unit through all ages yet to be. If the family unit continues, if husband and wife go into the spirit world as a married couple and come up in the resurrection continuing as husband and wife, then exaltation is assured. If they go there separately and singly—either not having entered into this celestial order or, having entered into it, having not kept the terms and conditions and laws that appertain to it—they will have immortality only and not eternal life.

All men will get all that they are able to receive, all that a gracious and merciful Father can give them, but the fulness is reserved for those who abide the whole gospel law, who keep all of the terms and conditions of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.

Now, how much do you love your husband or your wife? With what desire do you seek eternal exaltation in the mansions hereafter? Let it be remembered that love is measured in terms of obedience and of service, in accordance with the principle, "If ye

love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) Accordingly, if we have in our hearts a love, born of the Spirit of Christ, for our families, and for that matter, for our own salvation, we will seek to do those things which will qualify us to gain recommends to the temple, there to be sealed in the eternal marriage union; and then having been so sealed, we will desire with all our hearts to walk in the light, to keep the covenant that we have made, so that it will be of full force and validity in the eternal world, having been bound on earth and sealed in heaven, having been ratified by the Spirit here, and made of full force and validity in the mansions hereafter. There is not any single thing, any single act or performance that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world as important as marrying the right person in the right place by the right authority, because that kind of marriage is the gate to peace and contentment and happiness in this life, and it opens the door to the attainment of the fulness of the kingdom of the Father hereafter. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy. Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us, and Brother Lee will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

THIS MORNING in the opening session our beloved President lifted my soul with his remarkable address, and it pleases me to know that my whole soul responds to the truthfulness of the great message which he gave us. I trust that in these few minutes what I say will be in full harmony with that about which he has instructed us.

The sermon of President Bruce R. McConkie has laid a remarkable foundation for the thoughts which I have had on this same important subject, so important to the welfare of all our Father's

children here and in the world to come. So the spirit willing, and if I may have an interest in your faith and prayers, I would like to speak briefly about this sacred ordinance of temple marriage which is so vital to every human soul.

I should like to introduce my few remarks by relating three simple incidents that have occurred on this block; then I should like to bring one or two powerful lessons from the scriptures and from the sermons of some of our leaders; and then conclude, in the few moments

that I have, with a few observations with reference thereto.

These three incidents are true life stories as told by temple watchmen who serve us around the clock over on the east gate through which all who come to the temple proper must enter. I shall read these incidents just as they were given to me by the brethren.

"One morning not so long ago I was sitting at the desk in the temple gate house reading when my attention was drawn to a knock on the door. There stood two little boys, ages about seven or eight years. As I opened the door, I noticed that they were poorly dressed and had been neither washed nor combed. They appeared as if they had left home before Father or Mother had awakened that morning. As I looked beyond these little fellows, I saw two infants in pushcarts. In answer to my question as to what they wanted, one of the boys pointed to his little brother in the cart and replied: 'His name is Joe. Will you shake hands with little Joe? It is little Joe's birthday—he is two years old today, and I want him to touch the temple so when he gets to be an old man he will remember he touched the temple when he was two years old.'

"Pointing to the other little boy in the other cart, he said this: 'This is Mark, he's two years old, too.' Then, with a solemn, reverent attitude rare in children so young, he asked: 'Now can we go over there and touch the temple?' I replied: 'Sure you can.' They pushed their little carts over to the temple and lifted the infants up, and placed their hands against that holy building. Then as I stood there with a lump in my throat, I heard the little boy say to his infant brother, 'Now, Joe, you will always remember when you was two years old you touched the temple.' They thanked me and departed for home."

The second incident:

"This spring (1956) a large group of young men and young women (perhaps one hundred) ages fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years, from Spokane Stake, came to the temple of the Lord to perform baptisms for the dead. They were a very fine-looking group. Their features beamed with the light of the gospel. They were quiet and very

orderly; they possessed the spirit of reverence. They realized they were on holy ground and were about to enter into God's holy temple to perform baptisms for the dead. Led by the priesthood and members of the genealogical committee into the temple, they gave the right to citizenship in the kingdom of God to perhaps 750 souls. As they came out of the temple after their day's work was done, I saw a young girl go up the steps to the main entrance to the temple on the east side. As I approached her I noticed she was standing facing the door with bowed head and hands clasped in prayer. I waited. As she descended the granite steps she came over to me, tears of joy streaming down her face. She said, 'This has been the happiest day of my life.'

(May I pause to say that perhaps she, too, that day had truly touched the temple for the first time through holy and sacred ordinances.)

And then the final incident:

"As I see almost daily Latter-day Saint women who have sold their birthright for a pot of porridge and are now reaping the whirlwind—women who could have enjoyed the blessing of the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, but who failed to heed the counsel of the prophets of God and married out of the temple of God. Mothers bring their daughters as far as the temple gate house (for that is as far as they are permitted to go), and as they cling to each other in loving embrace, weeping as if their hearts would break, daughter taking departure and entering into the temple of the Lord—Mother is heard to say, 'Oh, if I had but listened to my parents and to the counsel given me by my bishop to prepare myself and wait until with my husband, I could be married in the house of the Lord! I have tried for thirty years to convince my husband that Mormonism is true, but I have utterly failed. And to think I am not even permitted to witness my daughter's marriage and that I may never have the joyous experience which is now to be hers!'"

As I relate these incidents, those of you who may not now be members of the Church may ask, "But why is a marriage in the temple so important?"

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Brother McConkie has answered it perfectly. Shall I summarize what he said as he has quoted from the scriptures? Only through this sacred ordinance of a temple marriage can members of the Church receive an exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

Listen again to the word of the Lord:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase. (D & C 131:1-4.)

The Lord has said it again in another revelation:

... if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; ... and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. (*Ibid.*, 132:19.)

In explanation of that scripture, the Prophet Joseph Smith said this (and I read this because there seems to be some misunderstanding as to just what the Lord meant) the Prophet said in explanation:

Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant, and are married for eternity while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. The unpardonable sin is to shed innocent blood or to be ac-

cessory thereto. All other sins will be visited with judgment in the flesh, and the spirit being delivered to the buffetings of Satan until the day of the Lord Jesus. (DHC Vol. 5, pp. 391-2.)

(And of course, this last statement means clearly on condition that they repent of their sins.)

As I have gone throughout the Church, I have been concerned to know why there are so many of our young people who do not avail themselves of the opportunity of going to the temple. I have asked our leaders as I have gone about to stake conferences, and they have given me several answers.

The most frequent reason given is that young people do not have proper encouragement from their homes. Unfortunately, many, unlike the little children in the incident I have related, have not been impressed in their childhood with the sacred privileges of the temple. Parents who themselves have lightly regarded their temple covenants can expect little better from their children because of their bad example. Little children should not be taught to reverence the temple itself but to look forward reverently to the holy experiences which one day might be theirs.

And then another reason is one that strikes a bit of pain to the hearts of all of us who realize that there must be much truth to it. Our leaders say that some do not go to the house of the Lord because they are not worthy of a temple recommend. It was the late Brother Orson F. Whitney who wrote a beautiful verse which is found at the entrance of the Alberta Temple:

Hearts must be pure to come within these
walls
Where spreads a feast unknown to festive
halls.
Freely partake, for freely God has given,
And taste the holy joys that tell of heaven.

Here learn of Him who triumphed o'er the
grave,
And unto men the Keys, the kingdom gave:
Joined here by powers that past and present
bind
The living and the dead perfection find.

Now there are certain standards that are required, as President McConkie has explained, and the bishop and the stake

president are expected to scrutinize each applicant in order to keep sacred these holy temples where these sacred ordinances are being performed.

With regard to this matter of keeping young people pure and clean for these sacred privileges, I found something that to me was great wisdom from an address by Dr. Henry I. Bowman, President of Stephens College at Columbia, Missouri. It is an all-girls' junior college. The article is headed: "Petting, Hasty Marriages, and Babies." I read one or two paragraphs:

If any girl thinks she is doing her boy friend a favor by permitting or encouraging petting, she's both stupid and juvenile. A friendship with a girl of a warm, vibrant, and genuine personality and charm—a friendship that later may culminate in marriage—is more significant to a lonely boy.

Now and then, young people enter into hasty marriages with the hope of insuring fidelity of the other during their separation. They forget that fidelity depends, not upon formal vows, but upon an inherent sense of decency and honor. If that is lacking, no ceremony can make up for it. A sweetheart is just as powerful an urge to fidelity as a wife.

I've noticed that few partners in hasty or war marriages include in their sketchy plans the possibility of a baby. One recent bride told me casually she was going to live with her parents until her husband returned. "And will there be room if you have a child?" I asked. "Heavens, no," she replied, "we aren't worrying about that." Like thousands of other brides and grooms, this couple is accepting the responsibilities of marriage without accepting the responsibilities of children. Aside from the question of the morality of planning a childless marriage, even temporarily, there is the practical fact that few marriages turn out happily that are deliberately childless.

I wish that all of the youth of the land could hear the counsel of that wise educator and leader of youth.

Some tell us that young people have avoided going to the temple because they prefer a time marriage first to see whether or not their marriage is going to prove successful before they go to the temple. And some have said facetiously, "Well, I am not sure whether I want him for eternity or not."

President Brigham Young, commenting upon this very matter, said this:

Those who attain to the blessings of the first or celestial resurrection will be pure and holy, and perfect in body. Every man and woman that reaches to this unspeakable attainment will be as beautiful as the angels that surround the throne of God. If you can, by faithfulness in this life, attain the right to come up in the morning of the resurrection, you need entertain no fears that the wife will be dissatisfied with her husband or the husband with the wife, for those of the first resurrection will be free from sin and from the consequences and power of sin. This body is "sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (*Journal of Discourses* 10:24.)

Those who go to the marriage altar with love in their hearts, we might say to them in truth, if they will be true to the covenants that they take in the temple, fifty years after their marriage they can say to each other: "We must have not known what true love was when we were married, because we think so much more of each other today!" And so it will be if they will follow the counsel of their leaders and obey the holy, sacred instructions given in the temple ceremony; they will grow more perfectly in love even to a fulness of love in the presence of the Lord himself. Young people do not know the true sacredness of marriage until they have been taught by the temple ordinance.

Another of the reasons given why some do not marry in the temple is that they marry out of the Church and therefore cannot enter the temple. Dr. Paul Popenoe, who is not of us but is a wise man in counseling on such matters, has this to say concerning marrying outside of your church:

The price may be almost anything. It may be alienation from your own family or alienation of your bride from hers; it may be giving up your church to join hers. It may be the abandonment of each of church affiliation, and living thenceforth without association with organized religions; it may be less than any of these, or much more; count the price before you go ahead; and if you want to do it, pay it in advance!

I wish the parents could understand

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that youth will find their mates from that company which they frequent the most. However, we must not despair, even if some of ours do marry away from us. We must not relinquish our hold upon them or slacken our efforts to try to persuade, as long as life shall last.

Finally, our leaders say that because of the fashions of the day our young people are persuaded to marry out of the Church. They desire a so-called church wedding with much pomp and ceremony, some because they prefer a sort of semi-nudity in their social life that is not permitted in those who have obeyed the basic requirements of the temple which counsel as to modesty in dress. Careless mothers who permit even in childhood or babyhood nudity or semi-nudity in dress are but sowing the seeds of disregard for standards of modesty which if taught and adhered to in her growing up years will prepare a daughter for entrance into the holy and sacred ordinances of the Lord.

I listened to a young lad I was interviewing for a mission in Canada, and as I talked to him to inquire whether he had kept himself morally clean, he smiled, this handsome, fine son, and replied, "I will have to tell you what my mother told me. She said, 'Son, no mother can raise a fine son without the aid of a pure, sweet girl to help her. Be sure, then, Son, you choose the right kind of girl companion.'" He said, "I have done that, and I am clean, as my mother has counseled me to be."

Our boys overseas have looked forward to the day when they could come home and marry sweet, clean girls.

Some time ago, I wrote something to the mothers of the Church about preparing their daughters to enter the temple:

In this day, the fashions, the sham, the pretenses, and the glamour of the world have badly distorted the holy concept of home and marriage, and even the marriage ceremony itself. Blessed is the wise mother who paints a living picture to her daughter of a sacred scene in an exquisite, heavenly sealing room where, shut out from all that is worldly, and in the presence of parents and intimate family friends, a beautiful, youthful bride and groom clasp hands across a holy altar. Thank God for that

mother who shows her daughter that here, nearest to heaven on earth, heart communes with heart, in a mutuality of love that begins a oneness which defies the ravages of hardship, heartaches, or disappointments to destroy, and supplies the greatest stimulus for life's highest attainments! (*Relief Society Magazine*, June 1955, p. 351.)

And now may I close with one more incident. I was attending a stake conference where a mother was asked to speak of the joys that had now come since she and her husband had together been to the temple. She said when they were married he was a fine, honorable man, but he had some habits that did not permit him to hold the priesthood. He said, "If you will join me in a civil marriage, I promise you I will get in shape, and I will get a recommend and take you to the temple." He was like the man who said he knew he could stop smoking because he had done it a thousand times.

So he tried all through these years but had never been successful. Before he was ready, they had five lovely girls in their family. But now somebody touched the heart of this man; he was given the priesthood and a recommend; and they went to the temple. She described the going to the temple and what it meant, and how finally they came into that most beautiful of all the rooms in the temple, and as they knelt at the altar, their five little girls dressed in beautiful white dresses came in and took their places around the altar, and there a man of God pronounced them a family for eternity.

Her story was impressively told and touched every heart. Then she leaned over the pulpit. Sitting right down in the front seat was her husband. She looked down at him, and for that moment she seemed to forget that there was anybody else in the room but just the two of them. She said to him, "Daddy, I don't know how to tell you how the girls and I feel about what you have done for us. I guess all we can say is, Daddy, thanks from the bottom of our hearts, because except for you, the girls and I would never have a chance to be a family together in the celestial kingdom. Thank God for you, Daddy, and for what you have done for us."

Oh, that every father-heart in this whole Church could hear the cry of that mother-heart, and before it is too late, prepare himself to go and to enter into this sacred ordinance, for which I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Sonne will be followed by Elder Levi Edgar Young.

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

IN THIS POSITION, brethren and sisters, one always becomes conscious of his limitations. The other day I read in a local newspaper about a sarcastic lawyer who was making it pretty rough for the witness. The lawyer said, "Did you see the accident?" The witness replied, "Yes, sir."

"How far away were you?"

The witness said, "Oh, about thirty feet."

"Well, how far can you see anyway?"

He said, "I do not know, but in the morning when I wake up I can see the sun, and they tell me it is about ninety million miles away."

I shall always appreciate the fact that the missionaries of the Church found my grandparents in faraway Scandinavia. That circumstance accounts for my greatest blessing in this life. As a result, I have grown up in the Church among God's people in these valleys of the mountains. From my earliest recollections, I was taught faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the promises and the predictions of holy prophets. I recall that I was very young when I first heard the story of the restoration and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. I believed it then as I believe it now. I knew then as I know now that my grandparents had not been misled.

As a young man doing missionary work over in England, I became the private secretary to President Charles W. Penrose and to President Rudger Clawson. From them I learned many things which confirmed my belief and strengthened my testimony. Since then I have examined the claims of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I have weighed and tested every doctrine and every

teaching of the Church. I have compared them with the teachings of other churches. The gospel message as revealed through the latter-day Prophet is complete and soul-satisfying. It is the power of God unto salvation.

I know this, and I testify to you that I do know it. No alterations and no far-fetched explanations have been necessary. The original declarations made by Joseph still stand. They cannot and have not been changed to satisfy the whims of critics, either in the Church or out of the Church.

In the year 1829 the Book of Mormon appeared. It was received with an avalanche of abuse and ridicule. It was repudiated and cast aside as being unworthy of study and serious consideration. But, my brethren and sisters, the tide is turning. It is turning with marvelous rapidity in these, our days. Thinking men are beginning to regard it as a powerful book with a great message. It has had wide distribution. Many translations have been made. It reveals God's purposes with respect to man's sojourn in mortality. It brings to light the results of skepticism and wrongdoing. It emphasizes the sanctity and durability of divine commandments in directing men in this striving for God's favors and blessing. It confirms the teachings of the Holy Bible, and proclaims the deityship of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, and the atonement wrought out on Calvary.

There is much controversy in these modern times even among so-called Christian leaders concerning these religious fundamentals. Once they were regarded as the rock foundation of the Christian religion. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a part of the