

thirteen years of age. At twelve he had been ordained a deacon because he had been obedient to the teaching and training received through attending Primary and Sunday School and all the services he could attend. When he became thirteen, his father decided to move into the backwoods of Wyoming, where they were some distance from a Church. There was no transportation, so he didn't attend his meetings. He got out of the habit of going to Church, he said, and took up other habits. Later, he married a lovely woman who had faith, who had a precious spark in her heart and her soul. She continued to yearn for the day when he would see the light and would know this gospel as the Master had taught it.

He said, "I have done many things that I am ashamed of. I smoked, I drank—and stronger than beer on occasion. I am not proud of it. I have not been the father that I should have been to these children. There has not been true happiness in our home; I have not been the husband that I should have been to my good wife; but I stand here today to testify to you that I would not return to that old life for all the gold in Fort Knox. I have not missed a Sacrament meeting from that time to this, which is five years, except when I have been in Salt Lake City attending general conference."

How grateful I am that the gospel can work in the lives of individuals when they have the desire, when they understand the meaning of being doers

of the word, referred to in President David O. McKay's message at the opening of this conference.

May we all, I pray, have the desire to demonstrate by our works that we truly are followers of the Master. May our testimonies be cultivated and fed by the spirit of truth to remain strong, regardless of trials or obstacles, that we may be able to rise above them, even as John on the Isle of Patmos, who recognized that he was there because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ:

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1:9.)

Yes, customs may change, but principles do not; for assurance, knowledge, and testimony are eternal principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ today as they were yesterday; I so testify to you in all sobriety. May God bless us to live in accordance with his glorious eternal truths I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Stapley of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

I AS THE OTHERS who have preceded me, seek an interest in your faith and prayers while I take this time.

I have been thankful for this chorus, for the music that they have rendered to us. I am more thankful for that wonderful hosannah anthem they sang at the close of this morning's session. It was a real thrill, and coming on this day it has another and vital importance. Today is the eightieth anniversary of the dedication of the St. George Temple.

Those who have been reading their IMPROVEMENT ERA would know that.

Many people wonder about the difference in the many buildings that we have in the Church. I think we have more variety of buildings than anyone else. We have the temple, which is different from any other building in the world, and people outside the Church, of course, have to be instructed in the difference, and they wonder why until they are taught what is different about our temples.

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The word *temple* comes from the Latin *templum*—which was the equivalent of the Hebrew “*beth Elohim*,” and signified the abode of Deity; hence, as associated with divine worship, it meant literally the “house of the Lord.”

Temples have never been regarded as places of ordinary public assembly or public houses of worship, but as sacred enclosures consecrated to the most solemn ceremonials of religion. Whether a house of the Lord be the gift of a man or of a nation, the best, if offered willingly and with pure intent, is always excellent in the sight of God, however poor by other comparison that best may be.

There are always materials and means available to build temples whenever and wherever there are enough Saints worthy to receive the blessings to be had therein. The best way to build temples is to do missionary work and bring souls unto him, and the temples will then be built.

As the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, the Lord requested a house of the Lord, or a tabernacle, to be built. To the call for material wherewith to build the tabernacle there was such willing and liberal response that the need was more than met. It is recorded:

For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much. (Ex. 36:7.)

After Israel had become established in the land of promise, after four decades of wandering in the wilderness, the tabernacle with its sacred contents found a resting place in Shiloh; and thither came the tribes to learn the will and word of God. Afterward it was removed to Gibeon, and yet later to the City of David, or Zion.

David, the second king of Israel, desired and planned to build a house unto the Lord. But the Lord made it plain that to be acceptable to him, it was not enough that the gift alone be appropriate, but that the giver must also be worthy. Nevertheless David was permitted to gather materials for the house of the Lord, which edifice not he, but Solomon, his son, built.

Solomon the king, the man of wisdom, the master-builder, was led astray by

the wiles of idolatrous women, and his wayward ways fostered iniquity in Israel. The nation was no longer a unit; there were factions and sects, parties and creeds, some worshiping on the hilltops, others under green trees, each party claiming excellence for its own particular shrine. The temple soon lost its sanctity.

Are we, in this generation, immune to the same disaster? How often have I heard people say that they prefer to commune with their Maker in the canyons, or elsewhere, instead of attending their Sacrament meetings. They prefer the trees and the mountains to their church. As President Smith has told us today, many people are losing the right attitude toward keeping the Sabbath day holy. As a result they lose the desire and the right to go to the temple. Some intend to go later, when it is more convenient. These people lose the blessings of eternity, and to them the temple loses its sanctity.

Solomon's temple was finally destroyed. The temple of Zerubbabel was erected by the Jews 515 years before Christ, again using the best the people could give. Sixteen years B.C. Herod I, king of Judea, reconstructed the run-down temple of Zerubbabel, which was later partially destroyed at the time of the crucifixion of Christ. In 70 A.D. it was utterly destroyed by fire when the Jews became the captives of the Romans under the rule of Titus. The temple of Herod was the last temple or house of the Lord on the Eastern Hemisphere. Since then, many church buildings have been built, but no offer of a sanctuary was made unto the Lord; indeed it appears that no need of such was recognized. The apostate church declared that direct communication from God had ceased, and in place of divine administration, a self-constituted government claimed supreme power.

James Cardinal Gibbons, in explaining the infallibility of the pope in *Faith of Our Fathers*, says:

1st. The infallibility of the Popes does not signify that they are inspired. The Apostles were endowed with the gift of inspiration, and we accept their writings as the revealed word of God.

No Catholic, on the contrary, claims that

the Pope is inspired, or endowed with divine revelation properly so called.

A more complete denial of the power of God could not be made.

Today we have the sacred temples again, not one, but many, today being the eightieth anniversary of the dedication of the first temple to be completed among the mountains of the west—the temple in St. George. And these temples stand as evidence and a witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ is again in the earth, restored by revelation to authorized servants of God.

Anciently, to gain salvation had two requirements: first, to live a righteous life, keeping the commandments of God; second, to accept and participate in the ordinances of the gospel, administered by authorized servants of God.

These requirements have never changed. Today we believe that man may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. We believe that man must be called of God to administer in the ordinances thereof.

Jesus said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.)

Baptism, then, is a requirement for all, both the living and the dead, for entrance into the kingdom of God, except those who died before the age of eight. How then can the dead be baptized? Many who are dead lived at a time when the gospel was not on the earth. Would it be just to deny them the kingdom of God? Certainly not. The Lord has provided that the living may be baptized by proxy for the dead. A man may be baptized by proxy for a man who has died.

Evidence that such vicarious work was performed in the early Christian Church is found in the words of Paul to the Corinthians:

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? (I Cor. 15:29.)

Peter tells us:

For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might

be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (I Peter 4:6.)

This scripture is evidence that those who have died will have the opportunity to hear the gospel and accept of the ordinances performed by proxy for them.

The ordinance of baptism for the living may be performed wherever there is sufficient water, but when being done for the dead, this ordinance is so sacred the Lord has required that it be done only within his holy house, the temple.

The Lord has declared that baptism is necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God. He has also said, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" (John 14:2.) Therefore, other ordinances are necessary for advancement within his kingdom. One such ordinance is that of marriage.

In the sight of the Lord, the marriage covenant is so sacred that he has required that it be solemnized in his temple for time and all eternity. Brother McConkie yesterday gave us a very fine talk on the principles of that ordinance of the gospel, which I recommend to all of you to study again. Love is eternal, even as God himself is eternal. And President McKay told us last evening of the eternity of love, and I am sure that I will go on loving my wife and our children after death, as well as here. Your love for your wife and family will also continue. It would not be heaven if it were otherwise.

When the Savior was upon the earth, he told his apostles:

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. (Matt. 16:19.)

That same authority to bind on earth that it may be bound in heaven, is the priesthood of God which is now upon the earth again, that husband and wife may be sealed together for time and all eternity; that we may have our loved ones in the next world the same as here. That makes a real heaven.

This ordinance, vital for the living,

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is also just as vital for all God's children, including those who died without these glorious opportunities. Therefore, the ordinance of marriage and sealing children to parents must also be done vicariously for the dead, and also in the temple. The great genealogical work of the Church is of vital importance.

A temple then, has two main purposes: It is a holy edifice in which the most sacred ordinances of the gospel may be performed for the living and for the dead.

A great responsibility rests upon the living in this day: first, to prepare themselves by so living that they may be found worthy to receive these saving blessings for themselves; second, that they may also be worthy of doing the vicarious work for their kindred dead. Without the living, the dead have no hope, and the earth would be cursed at his coming.

Too many who claim to be Latter-day

Saints do not avail themselves of these eternal blessings. I do not think the Lord will accept their flimsy excuses. Brother Lee told us yesterday how we should be concerned about this situation in the Church.

The steady growth of the Church today is increasing the demands upon the temples. Additional temples are being built, and many more will follow. They stand today as a witness to the world, testifying that the heavens have been opened and the gospel of Jesus Christ is again restored to the earth, with the power and authority to act in his name. This I testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, has just concluded speaking. Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BELOVED brothers and sisters, I am indeed grateful for the messages of this conference, starting with the great message of our beloved President yesterday morning. Several have established the springboard that I should like to start from in what I have to say this afternoon.

It is gratifying to witness the leaven of the gospel at work, infused and invigorated by faithful and devoted Church leadership, which is awakening faith, encouraging renewed activity, and promoting an upsurge of spirituality among members whose lives heretofore have not responded fully to the teachings and ordinances of the everlasting gospel covenant, restored in this dispensation of God's providence as a light to the world and as a standard for his people. The results are so pronounced, as evidenced by activity reports, that they can be measured and totaled. It all adds up to a satisfying accomplishment which has brought joy, happiness, peace, and contentment to many families. The wisdom of the present pro-

gram to reach out and touch the lives of all Church members with the gospel of salvation cannot be gainsaid because the benefits thus far have been most fruitful and stimulating. Many have been motivated to give up bad habits, also indifferent attitudes, and in so doing have prepared, qualified, and made themselves worthy for the choice privileges and sacred blessings of the Church, the priesthood, and the temples of God. Those engaged in this worth-while service also have been blessed and fully recompensed. The Apostle James gave this admonition and promise:

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. (James 5:19-20.)

If I understand the plan of exaltation correctly, all eternal blessings are obtained by and through the Holy Priesthood of God. They cannot be obtained in any other way. That being true,