

Friday, October 2

First Day

The voting, as far as I can note, is unanimous in the affirmative.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President Hugh B. Brown, first counselor in the First Presidency, has just presented the General Authorities and general officers and general Auxiliary Officers of the Church for your sustain-

ing vote. We thank you, brethren and sisters, for this unanimous sustaining vote this afternoon. We are grateful to you for your faith and loyalty to the great cause in which we are engaged.

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of Seventy and President of the speaker this afternoon, and he will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of Seventy.

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

A Parable

May I preface my talk with a parable. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto a certain man. . ." (See Matt. 20:1.)

John and Mary were married by their bishop in his palatial home, and the ceremony included the phrase, "so long as you both shall live." Relatives and friends exclaimed, "What a handsome, promising couple!" Life seemed to offer everything two delightful people could hope for.

It was a civil ceremony, but they promised themselves that they would soon get their house in order and go to the Lord's temple to have their marriage eternalized. They loved each other intensely. They had some knowledge of and faith in the principle of eternal marriage, but carelessness in their pattern of living and bad habits precluded their conscientiously asking the bishop for a recommend to enter the sacred precincts of the temple.

Time passed. Children came. John was active in community life. His pleasing personality made him many friends. Mary grew more lovely as the children came, and sweet motherhood and wifehood expanded her vision and enlarged her soul. The love she bore for her husband grew constantly, and as their lives grew together, she came to realize how she wanted him forever. She came to sense her predicament. Shadows gathered. He was not religiously inclined, he said; some day he would move toward the temple.

She took some part in church ac-

tivity but when there came conflict between church service and his Sabbath interests, she felt that she should be with her husband—she loved him so very much. The children grew and were happy in the Church until teenage activities brought carefree, leisurely Sabbaths—rides, dates, skiing—and they also began to bypass their religious duties.

One day the clouds lowered, and trouble came. It was on one of those Sunday canyon picnics. An excellent driver, John was not at fault for the crash when a drinking driver left both cars junk and two loved ones mangled and lifeless.

When the bodies of his beloved Mary and sweet little Alice had been buried with all solemnity and every tender affection, John found his life lonely indeed. The nights were so long, the house so empty, the days so barren, life so vain and desolate. He devoted himself to his work and to his other children, but his world seemed to have been buried in a hillside grave.

At the table the circle was incomplete. There were two vacant places. Social life had no interest for him. No one knew how he suffered. No one knew how his heart ached. His thoughts were constantly of Mary, his companion, his beloved, the mother of his children. When he returned from his work, it seemed she should be there to slip into his arms; when he awakened in the morning, it seemed he could not get over expecting to find her by his side. His first and last conscious thoughts were of Mary.

Then this night came the dream, or

was it a dream, for he seemed to be so much awake. Unlike hundreds of his other dreams which had faded into oblivion with the coming of the dawn, this impressive one lingered all the day.

It seemed he was in a world where he had never been before. He was looking through a wide, heavy, open gate leading into a beautiful area in which the central figures were a woman and a little girl. Gradually, he became conscious of their identity, and he felt a warm glow as he recognized little Alice with her mother. Mary was more lovely than ever; her charm and beauty had been accentuated. She was captivating, heavenly, and as both his loved ones smiled and beckoned to him, he wanted, oh, how he wanted, to go to them. They seemed anxious that he join them. He tried to go to them, but he could not seem to move, and as he struggled it appeared that the great gates were closing. Mary and Alice seemed conscious of this also and beckoned frantically, but he was powerless to do that which at this moment he wanted so much to do. The movement of the gates was almost imperceptible, but the aperture was definitely narrowing. He tried desperately but futilely to reach them. If he could but join them! They, too, were eager for reunion. He caught a final glimpse and saw terror registered on Mary's face as she, too, must have realized that the door was nearly closed. As the lock clicked, it was like thunder in his sensitive ears, and he felt he would give anything, everything, even life itself to see her again, to be with her again, to have her always with him.

The alarm clock clanged. He was back in the world. Ah! It was *only* a dream! Or was it? Had he missed the mark? Had the great door really slammed shut? Had he lost his loved companion forever because he had failed to meet requirements?

And, we sadly recall the couplet, ". . . of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these, 'It might have been!'" (Whittier, *Maud Muller*.)

May I address my remarks to the numerous happily married couples who were united for the relatively

short period of time as stated by the bishop, "so long as you both shall live," and to those millions of well-adjusted couples in the world who were united by their ministers, priests, rabbis, or other prelates for the period stated "until death do you part."

I plead with you peace-loving, sincere, but uninformed couples who love your companions and children, but who, in your vaunted false security, permit the days to pass, and the months and the years without protecting your precious marriages against sure dissolution, when certain efforts and activities could preserve through eternity your warm and pleasant family relationships.

A few of you know the requirements but have ignored or rejected them. The great majority of you have never known the facts, so veiled in mystery they have been, and so long absent from the earth, and so little understood even by Bible students.

Man is Eternal: Marriage and Family Can Be

These are absolute facts:

Life is eternal. Death does not terminate the existence of man. He lives on and on. Man will be resurrected whether good or evil. His spirit will be reunited with his body from the grave, and if he has perfected his life and magnified his God-given opportunities, that spirit and body will be brought together in a new, fresh, never-ending immortality.

The greatest joys of true married life can be continued. The most beautiful relationships of parents and children can be made permanent. The holy association of families can be never-ending if husband and wife have been sealed in the holy bonds of eternal matrimony. Their joys and progress will never end, but this will never fall into place of its own accord.

The way is well-defined and clear. Eternal marriage was known to Adam and others of the prophets, but the knowledge was lost from the earth for many centuries. God has restored the truths and has provided the way. With the restoration of the gospel came also the genuine priesthood, and God has

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given to his prophet all keys, powers, and authorities held by Adam and Abraham and Moses and the early-day Apostles.

God has restored the knowledge of temples and their purposes. On the earth this day are thirteen holy structures built to this special work of the Lord, and each is the "House of the Lord." In these temples, by duly constituted authority, are men who may seal for all eternity, husbands and wives and their children. This is a fact even though unknown to the masses, and it is available as folks acquaint themselves with the need. This is one of the mysteries spoken of by the Redeemer, who taught the multitude in parables, saying:

"... I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:35.)

These priceless truths are not understood by the casual reader of the scriptures:

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:11.)

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (*Ibid.*, 2:14.)

It is inconceivable that otherwise intelligent, astute, and highly educated people should ignore or wilfully disregard this great privilege. The doors can be unlocked. The gap can be bridged. And men can walk safely, securely to never-ending happiness, making their marriages timeless and eternal.

Explaining the use of parables, the Savior said:

"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11.)

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their

heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (*Ibid.*, 13:15.)

And then speaking to those disciples who were near him and who understood, he said:

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

"For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (*Ibid.*, 13:16-17.)

The Lord knew that those who were sincere in heart and who really wished to know the mysteries of the kingdom would seek and search prayerfully until they informed themselves.

It will be remembered how the Lord answered the hypocritical Sadducees who, trying to trap him, propounded this difficult problem:

The husband died leaving no posterity, and the wife married his brother who also died without seed. She in turn married a third brother, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh, all in accordance with the law of Moses, and then the woman of the seven husbands died also. Now the frustrating question is:

"In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife." (Mark 12:23.) The Redeemer's answer was clear and concise and unmistakable:

"Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God." (*Ibid.*, 12:24.)

And now, we ask you, what does this mean? The Sadducees were discussing matters about which they knew little or nothing. Was there accusation in his voice? Was he saying to the Sadducees, "Open your blind eyes and see? Open your stony hearts and understand?"

My friends, do you understand the implications and truth of this statement of the Lord? Though somewhat veiled in scripture, it is clear and understandable when supported by modern revelation.

An Ancient Example

Dr. James E. Talmage writes: "The Lord's meaning was clear, that in the resurrected state there can be no question among the seven brothers as to whose wife for eternity the woman shall be, since all except the first had married her for the duration of mortal life only. . . . In the resurrection, there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage; for all questions of marital status must be settled before that time, under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, which holds the power to seal in marriage for both time and eternity." (*Jesus the Christ*, p. 548.)

Undoubtedly, the first husband married the woman for eternity by a ceremony which was not limited by time. She became a widow at his demise until she should also die and join her husband. Now, she married brother number two, "until death do you part," and it definitely parted them even before posterity, and he went into the spirit world through the veil and with no wife, for their contract also had been terminated by death. And brothers number three and four and five and six and finally number seven in turn—all married her in temporary marriage, in which ceremonies were the limitations, "so long as you both shall live." And death terminated what happiness they had had and their promise of future bliss.

How sad! How gloomy!

I knew of one young couple whose promising marriage was ended by a car crash one hour after the ceremony which included those perilous words, "till death do you part."

Civil marriage is an earthly contract, completed in the death of either party. Eternal celestial marriage is a sacred covenant between man and woman, consecrated in the holy temple by servants of God who hold authoritative keys. It bridges death; it includes both time and eternity.

Paul's Testimony

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.)

And we could paraphrase it to say:

"If in this life only our marriages are firm, our marital bliss real, and our family life happy, we are of all men most miserable."

Paul continues, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 15:40-42.)

Paul understood, as undoubtedly did many of the Saints, but millions of Christians today do not understand these vital truths which have been veiled in parabolic language. Heaven is not a single place nor one single condition. It is as diverse as men's behavior patterns are different, for men will be judged "according to their deeds done in the flesh."

Modern Revelation

In our modern revelation, the Lord said: "Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant . . ." (D&C 132:3-4.)

Though relatively few people in this world understand it, the new and everlasting covenant is the marriage ordinance in the holy temple by the properly constituted leaders who hold the genuine, authoritative keys. This glorious blessing is available to men and women on this earth. The deep underlying purpose is clarified by the Redeemer himself:

"And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God." (*Ibid.*, 132:6.)

Paul spoke of telestial, terrestrial, and celestial areas, and people are assigned in accordance with their righteousness and their compliance with

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eternal laws. Even this celestial kingdom has three heavens or degrees. We quote our Lord further:

"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." (*Ibid.*, 131:2-4.)

The Lord then further clarifies the eternal marriage:

"All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (*Ibid.*, 132:7.)

The marriages then which are made only "so long as you both shall live" or "until death do you part" are sadly terminated when the last mortal breath is gasped.

The Lord is merciful, but mercy cannot rob justice. His mercy extended to us when he died for us. His justice prevails when he judges us and gives us the blessings which we have duly earned.

" . . . no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory," says the Lord.

"For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world." (*Ibid.*, 132:4-5.)

Civil Authority—Divine Authority

A civil marriage may be performed by any of the numerous people approved by laws of the respective countries, but the eternal marriage must be solemnized by one of the few properly authorized. Christ says:

"Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?

"Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?" (*Ibid.*, 132:9-10.)

It is the Redeemer who postulates: "Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world." (*Ibid.*, 132:15.)

"I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord." (*Ibid.*, 132:12.)

He then reiterates that: ". . . everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God." (*Ibid.*, 132:13.)

How final! How frightening! Since we know well that mortal death does not terminate our existence, since we know that we live on and on, how devastating to realize that marriage and family life, so sweet and happy in so many homes, will end with death because we fail to follow God's instructions or because we reject his word when we understand it.

Fulfillment the Blessing for Obedience

It is clear in the Lord's announcement that righteous men and women will receive the due rewards of their deeds. They will not be damned in the commonly accepted terminology but will suffer many limitations and deprivations and fail to reach the highest kingdom, if they do not comply. They become ministering servants to those who complied with all laws and lived all commandments.

He then continues concerning these excellent people who lived worthily but failed to make their contracts binding:

"For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged,

but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever." (*Ibid.*, 132:17.)

How conclusive! How bounded! How limiting! And we come to realize again as it bears heavily upon us that this time, this life, this mortality is the time to prepare to meet God. How lonely and barren will be the so-called single blessedness throughout eternity! How sad to be separate and single and apart through countless ages when one could, by meeting requirements, have happy marriage for eternity in the temple by proper authority and continue on in ever-increasing joy and happiness, growth and development toward Godhood.

Listen to the Lord again:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.

"For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

"But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.

"This is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ; whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

"Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law." (*Ibid.*, 132:21-25.)

If a man receives the Lord, he believes in him, lives his commandments, and performs the ordinances which he has required.

And now, we return to John and Mary and all the Johns and all the Marys who live together in peace and joy, who love each other, who appreciate spouses and love their children.

Eternities are Jeopardized by Non-Compliance

Brothers and sisters and friends, are

you willing to jeopardize your eternities, your great continuing happiness, your privilege to see God and dwell in his presence? For the want of investigation and study and contemplation; because of prejudice, misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, are you willing to forego these great blessings and privileges? Are you willing to make yourself a widow for eternity or a widower for endless ages—a single, separate individual to live alone and serve others? Are you willing to give up your children when they die or when you expire, and make them orphans? Are you willing to go through eternity alone and solitary when all of the greatest joys you have ever experienced in life could be "added upon" and accentuated, multiplied, and eternalized? Are you willing, with the Sadducees, to ignore and reject these great truths? I sincerely pray you stop today and weigh and measure and then prayerfully proceed to make your happy marriage an eternal one. Our friends, please do not ignore this call. I beg of you, open your eyes and see; unstop your ears and hear.

An eternal marriage plus a worthy continuing consecrated life will bring limitless happiness and exaltation.

May I conclude with the words of the Lord of Hosts:

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:18.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First council of Seventy and President of the South American Mission will now address us.