

dore M. Burton, one of the Assistants to the Twelve.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My brothers and sisters, I desire today to speak to you concerning the importance of temples. When the saints of God had gathered at Nauvoo, Illinois, the Lord gave them a revelation telling them to build a temple to him. These are his words:

Revelation to build a temple

"And send ye swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them: Come ye, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the box-tree, and the fir-tree, and the pine-tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth;

"And with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth; and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein.

"For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood." (D&C 124:26-28.)

Ordinances of the priesthood

In order to obtain a fullness of the priesthood of God, we must have temples wherein those sacred ordinances of the priesthood can be revealed to people who are willing and worthy to receive them. The Lord continues:

"And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

"For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that

those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

"Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelation and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

"And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people.

"For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times." (D&C 124:37-41.)

Nauvoo temple

This temple was constructed at Nauvoo, Illinois, and dedicated to the Lord. It was used by the saints, therein to receive these sacred ordinances which were mentioned in the revelation. In my book of remembrance I have a record of such ordinance work having been performed in the Nauvoo Temple for my progenitors on my Burton and on my Garr ancestral lines. I am humbly grateful that they were among those earliest members of the Church who received such priesthood blessings. Through sacred temple ordinances they provided a patriarchal inheritance of righteousness for all their descendants who remain

faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and who continue to obey his commandments after taking upon themselves his holy name.

Penalties for disobedience

In that same revelation from which I have quoted, there is a passage that gives me considerable concern:

"And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them.

"And it shall come to pass that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord.

"For instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practise before me, saith the Lord." (D&C 124:45-48.)

Fruits of faithfulness

The Church of Jesus Christ has built many houses to the Lord since that time, but are we doing all that the Lord desires of us? I know there are thousands of faithful saints who go to the temples and there perform saving ordinances in behalf of their kindred dead. Those who do this work and accept their obligations and keep their covenants are blessed of the Lord. There is a gentleness of spirit and a sweet peaceful influence that accompanies them in their daily lives. There is light in their eyes and peace in their souls that reflects the goodness of God. They foster the brotherhood of man as children of God and are good citizens in the lands in which they

live. They are slow to quarrel and quick to forgive. They are truly trying to be saints.

Attitude

The thing that worries me is that not all who go to the temples do so with a proper attitude. Some go to fulfill a duty almost in a spirit of "Let's go and get it over with!" They make no effort to prepare themselves by prayer and study for such sacred work. They take their problems and worries and secret sins to the temple with them. They are tense and many times selfish. They are in a hurry to be out again and so do not take the peaceful spirit of the temple back into their daily lives. They do not find the happiness and joy within the temple which should be found there. A person can never give what he does not receive. Unless we go to the house of the Lord taking with us the influence and spirit of God, we cannot expect God to fulfill the oath and promise he made to those who really love and serve him out of the abundance of their hearts.

Patriarchal covenants

Those who understand the patriarchal nature of the sealing covenants made in the temple realize the greatness and value of these temple blessings. They cannot rest until they have gathered together that information for their progenitors which identifies them. They then go to the temple to have those sealing ordinances performed in behalf of their ancestors by which their ancestors' places and their own places in the family of God are made secure. Such persons keep those sacred covenants themselves by which they can retain their inheritance as the children of God.

Malachi, third chapter

I have read again the words of the Angel Moroni when he appeared to give a revelation of instruction to the Prophet Joseph Smith, using these words:

"After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of

the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

"And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (Joseph Smith 2:36-39.)

The first instruction Moroni gave concerned the end goal toward which we are working. When Malachi prophesied of the second coming of Christ, he spoke of "the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly." Of whom was he speaking? First, of those who rejected Christ because of the pride of their hearts, and second, of those who, having accepted Jesus, were not valiant in keeping his commandments.

Malachi went on to say they "shall burn as stubble." This means that they shall be destroyed. By whom? Malachi explains, "They that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The plight of the indifferent

Those who come are those righteous hosts of heaven and righteous persons caught up from earth who shall come and return with the glorified, resurrected Savior to cleanse the earth. But what is meant by the expression "that it shall leave them neither root nor branch"? This expression simply means that wicked and indifferent

persons who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will have no family inheritance or patriarchal lineage—neither root (ancestors or progenitors) nor branch (children or posterity). Such persons cannot be received into the celestial kingdom of glory of resurrected beings, but must be content with a lesser blessing.

The prophet thus stressed the need of turning the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of fathers to their children. This turning of hearts to family relationships means establishing and sealing patriarchal lineage within the sacred confines of the temple and carrying that family inheritance into our daily lives. That is why, even if we do build temples, if we do not keep the covenants made in them, we will be rejected as a people.

Why was Jesus so hard on the scribes and pharisees of his day who rejected his message? He denounced them vigorously in these words:

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. 23:33-36.)

Let me quote the explanation of this scripture given by the Prophet Joseph Smith. In speaking of the gospel being preached to the spirits of those whose bodies lie in the grave and citing the necessity of baptism for and in behalf of the dead, the Prophet said:

"Hence it was that so great a responsibility rested upon the generation in which the Savior lived. . . . Hence as they possessed greater privileges than

any other generation [in having the Savior in person there to teach them] not only pertaining to themselves, but to their dead, their sin was greater, as they not only neglected their own salvation but that of their progenitors [because of their lack of power and privilege of helping those who were relying on them for release from bondage] and hence their blood [that is, of their progenitors] was required at their hands." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 222-223.)

If this was true of those who neglected their inheritance in the days of the Savior, is it not equally true today of us who live in the period known as the fullness of times? In our day the gospel in its entirety has been revealed, and our duty and obligation lies clearly before us. Small wonder then that the Lord instructed us as I have read before, that even if we build temples, if we do not also perform a labor of love therein, we will be rejected. The blood of our righteous ancestors will come upon our heads, and instead of blessings we will bring upon ourselves cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments. The Lord has called such neglect both a folly and an abomination.

Time for repentance

What a time this is, then, for re-

pentance! It is a time to seek the Lord humbly by knocking at the doors of his holy house with the sheaves of our offerings in our hands. These sheaves of offerings are the names of our progenitors to present before the Lord, that we and they may be saved through a sealing in that family relationship which is characteristic of the patriarchal order of the priesthood.

I bear you my witness of the divinity of this work given to us by God our Heavenly Father through living prophets. This privilege of having this knowledge comes to us only through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. Of him I testify that he lives! In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing, "High on the Mountain Top," after which we will hear from Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

Congregational Singing: "High on the Mountain Top."

The congregation and Combined Choirs sang the hymn, "High On The Mountain Top."

Elder Eldred G. Smith

Patriarch to the Church

I too would like to begin my message today with the same passage that President Tanner used this morning, this oft-repeated passage found in the 11th chapter of Luke where the Lord said: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11:9-10.)

He says, "ask," "seek," and

"knock." It's as if he were standing there with outstretched hands, waiting for us to reach out and take them. If we do not reach out, he cannot help.

It seems quite simple, but to "ask," "seek," or "knock" involves effort on our part.

To know right and wrong

Oliver Cowdery learned this lesson too. It seems that he had made an attempt to translate and failed, as a result of which we have the revelation given in Section 9 of the Doctrine and