

clean, safe, wholesome, happy community. I would not allow small, misguided, self-benefiting groups to rob from us the blessings of such a family community experience.

Live worthy of blessings

I pray that our harvest will be blessed with the fulness the Lord has promised to us because we have lived worthy of meriting His blessings. May our families be the traditional type, where the leadership is provided by two worthy parents who welcome children into their home to be loved, taught, and trained in the ways prescribed by the Lord.

I declare unto you my witness that the Lord is strong and mighty and is the King of Glory. He lives to lead and guide and bless us with His love.

May we be blessed with the faith to follow His way, which will lead us to life eternal, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Perry's remarks, the Choir sang "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee" without announcement.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

We shall now hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert L. Simpson

During these few moments I would like to bear witness to the fact that God's laws are anchored firmly and securely in place by eternal priesthood principle. Gospel truth stands as a pillar of peace, security, and freedom for all who would avail themselves. And I further attest that the ultimate in revealed truth, light, and eternal assurance is inseparably connected with the temple. Those sacred buildings are reverently and accurately referred to as the house of the Lord.

A temple of God in this day and age? How can this be? Most God-fearing folks think only in terms of ancient temples built when prophets lived among the people more than two thousand years ago.

A modern temple

Come with me inside the temple—a modern temple in our day; a temple that has been dedicated to

the Lord, just as ancient temples were; a special building where sacred ordinances are performed by those who have been commissioned with appropriate, divine authority. The temple is indeed a house of quiet worship—everyone speaks softly, usually in whispers. All who participate dress in white. All who come have been found worthy and clean.

The temple is a house of prayer, for Heavenly Father is glorified by every ordinance performed therein. He who enters for the first time receives a pronouncement of special blessings that are not available outside the temple.

The temple is a house of instruction—yes, even divine instruction—about God's eternal plan for his children. In the temple one gains a superior perspective about his personal relationship with his Maker and with the Savior—yes, special knowledge about God and Jesus Christ, which is essential to the obtaining of

life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The temple is a house of revelation—yes, continuing revelation. Whether that revelation be to a prophet or a member who seeks after truth, all who come to the temple seeking are continually taught and edified.

The temple is a house of commitment and sacrifice, for it is truly stated that there can be no true worship without sacrifice; indeed, as the Saints sing, sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.

The temple is a house of solemn covenant where one appropriately commits himself to live a more Christlike life. Oh, that four billion people on earth could enter into that kind of covenant!

The temple is a house where young people are married for time and for all eternity. Thus, a common bond is formed, a bond that transcends the earthly pitfalls of misunderstanding, distrust, and, too often, divorce.

House of God; eternal relationships

The temple is a house of eternal relationships, a place where families can come for the purpose of transforming their family circle into an eternal family unit, where all of a sudden "together forever" becomes far more important than the next trivial family difference. You see, eternal families reason together in family council with dad at the head.

The temple is a house of God where all of those declared worthy are extended the privilege of performing the sacred ordinances of the temple on behalf of their forebears, that in very deed the hearts of the children might be turned to their fathers, as foretold in the holy scriptures (see Mal. 4:6). Like all of Heavenly Father's blessings for his

children, the eventual realization is always on condition of faithfulness and conformity to priesthood principles.

Husbands and wives, love each other

The ultimate blessings of the temple are centered in the love and devotion between husband and wife. They must set the example—they are the core. The scriptures say it best of all: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11). Everything in this world that is counter to a tender and loyal husband-wife relationship is a tool of the adversary. Everything that promotes and perpetuates family unity—mother, father, and children properly endowed with and motivated by the light and truth of Christ—is in harmony with the Lord's plan for mortal man.

Husbands, love your wives; wives, honor your husbands. Look to the gospel for all solutions to your problems; be a proper example to your children. That is where it all starts. The poet Longfellow expressed it well in these words:

*"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she
follows;
Useless each without the other!"*
(*The Song of Hiawatha*, in *The Complete Poetical Works of Longfellow*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922, p. 135).

These poetic phrases are in harmony with temple teachings.

Eternal marriage

Just hours after a disastrous flood in Idaho a few years ago, one man who had apparently lost every

earthly possession wept bitterly. His despair was not so much over the temporal loss he had suffered, but rather, and far more important, his lovely wife and four children were unaccounted for and presumed drowned. But, within the hour good news came: his family had been miraculously saved and were waiting for him at a nearby emergency facility. The reunion that soon followed was a scene of supreme joy and happiness. His comment in the midst of the jubilation was classic: "I have my family again, and although I stand without one earthly possession left to my name, I feel like a millionaire." Each family member nodded concurrence. For, you see, this family was a very special family; they had recently been sealed together for time and for all eternity in a temple of the living God.

Just yesterday it was my special privilege to be present as a lovely young couple knelt at the altar of the temple. Each was dressed in robes of sparkling white. They were surrounded by a host of family and friends as these special words were spoken as part of the marriage covenant: "For time and for all eternity." You see, such was the precise nature of their *forever* marriage.

Oh, that all people everywhere could be touched by this divine teaching of light and truth that makes such a union possible, not for just a select few, but for any and all of God's children who might properly prepare themselves. But it must be done in *His* way.

Eternal marriage is so sacred that it can only be performed within the walls of the temple, and only by those who have been endowed with proper, divine authority to bind or seal on earth that which will be bound in heaven.

"Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the

Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens" (D&C 132:46).

Baptism for the dead

Now, let me introduce you to a group of twenty-five teenagers who have come to the temple at dawn to participate in the sacred ordinance of vicarious baptism. These young people had been found morally clean and worthy by their bishop. You see, bishops today are bound by the same guidelines as bishops of old, who were also taught: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." (Ps. 24:3-4.) There has always been a standard in the house of the Lord: that standard is purity and cannot be compromised.

These teenagers come in a spirit of reverence with the desire to do something for others who have lived before. One teenage girl made this comment: "Being baptized by immersion for one of my ancestors, who lived in the 1700s, made me very proud. I felt that she was right there with me. I know she was pleased and accepted the work that I did for her."

These teenagers were performing an ordinance that was practiced during Paul's ministry, for he wrote to the Saints of Corinth: "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?" (1 Cor. 15:29.)

This vicarious work for the dead, which was obviously practiced during New Testament times as attested by Paul, was obviously an important ordinance taught by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ following his crucifixion. Proof of this is found in Paul's own words as he bears testimony to the Galatians: "But I certify you, brethren, that the

gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11-12.)

Thousands work long hours in the temples to perform not only baptisms but other vicarious ordinances as well for those who had not the opportunity while in mortality. "If it were not so," the scriptures attest, "the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (JS—H 1:39).

The Savior had the power to provide immortality for the entire human race; we have the power to do vicarious work for only one at a time, but it is for the same glorious purpose and made possible by the same authority. Again, I quote the voice of the Lord: "For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you" (D&C 78:7).

Realize blessings of the temple

May I declare without apology that every living person should seek earnestly for the blessings of the temple as his ultimate goal. For there you will find peace; there you will come to know what security really is. There, in the house of the Lord, you can learn what you need to know to be truly free. There, tucked away from turmoil and strife, is the chance to be totally unselfish—a rarity in today's world.

I conclude with the loving counsel of the Savior, who said, "Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail" (D&C 6:34).

There is no foundation more secure than the temple. The work accomplished there transcends all other human effort. May we remove all obstacles to realize temple blessings; for I testify, He waits there for each of us, His children. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," following which Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

The congregation joined the Tabernacle Choir in singing the hymn "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning."

President Romney

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the first general session of the 150th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.