
TEMPLE WORSHIP

A Lecture by Elder John A. Widstoe, delivered under the auspices of the Genealogical Society of Utah, at the Assembly Hall, Temple Block, Salt Lake City, Tuesday evening, October 12, 1920.

My brethren and sisters, when those in charge of this work were planning the program, I urged upon them that they do not call this meeting for the Assembly Hall. I felt sure the congregation would be so small that we would all be unhappy. I am happily disappointed; and I am quite sure that neither the drawing power of Joseph Fielding Smith nor myself is the cause of this large attendance, but that the conviction in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints that all that pertains to temples and to temple work, to the salvation for the dead, is of tremendous worth. I regret, of course, that Elder Joseph Fielding Smith is not here tonight. I am sorry for those of you who came to hear him speak, for you will have to come again, because he speaks tomorrow. He is filling an important engagement, and we simply exchanged evenings. I regret, however, for my own sake, that he is not here, because what I have to say needs as a background the splendid talk that he has for us. He will deal with the spirit and the mission of Elijah. I was asked to speak about temple worship. He was to take up the great generalization, the great body of principles upon which this work rests; and I was to take one small part of the application of the work, for my theme. I feel just a little embarrassed to speak on temple worship without the background of Elder Smith's discourse. I am embarrassed also because I realize how utterly impossible it is to deal with so vast and comprehensive a subject in the few moments that I can take tonight, especially in the presence of so many of you who have spent your lives in temple service and who understand the subject so well. But, like you I am willing to obey orders and to do the best I can; and with the assistance of your faith and your prayers, I shall try to discuss with you some of the high points pertaining to temple worship which all should understand, whether we have received the blessings of the temple or whether we are candidates for temple blessings. It is to be an elementary, non-technical discussion.

Section Two.

If an apology were needed for speaking on temple worship, I would simply call your attention to Section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the first recorded revelation of the Lord in these latter days, through the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith.

"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;

"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."

Some day, no doubt, this Society will call us together and devote one evening or more to a discussion of this magnificent revelation its meaning, historical and doctrinal. Almost the first words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when as a boy he was called to restore the gospel of Jesus Christ, dealt with the subject that we are discussing throughout this week; and almost the last words spoken by God to the prophet before the prophet's death, as far as we can tell, dealt with the same subject.

Present Increased Interest in Temple Work.

There is at present an unusual increased interest in temple activity. Our temples are crowded. The last time I attended the Salt Lake Temple I was a member of the third company. One started early in the morning, one late in the forenoon, and my company started about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. It was about 6 p. m. before we had completed the day's work.

The number of temples is also increasing. The Hawaiian temple has only recently been dedicated; the Cardston temple is being rushed to completion, the Arizona temple is being planned and numerous communities in the Church are anxiously waiting and praying for the time that they may have temples.

There is a renewed spirit in behalf of temple work, not because people are wealthier than they were before, nor because temples are more accessible, but because the time has come for more temple work to be done. The spirit is abroad among the people, and those who are honest in heart and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are willing to give their time and means more liberally in behalf of temple work.

Opposition and Blessings from Temple Work.

In view of this great temple activity, we may well prepare ourselves for opposition. There never yet has been a time in the history of the world when temple work has increased without a corresponding increase in the opposition to it. Some three or four years after the pioneers came to this valley, President Brigham Young said it was time to begin the building of a temple; and some of the old timers here will probably remember that thousands of the Saints dreaded the command, because they said, "Just as soon as we lay the cornerstone of a temple, all hell will be turned loose upon us and we will be driven out of the valleys." President Young thought that was true, but that they also would have, if temple work were undertaken, a corresponding increase in power to overcome all evil. Men grow mighty under the results of temple service; women grow strong under it; the community increases in power; until the devil has less influence than he ever had before. The opposition to truth is relatively smaller if the people are engaged actively in the ordinances of the temple.

Temple Work for All the People.

We need more workers to accomplish the wonderful work that was outlined last night at the reception given by the First Presidency. Even three companies a day in each temple will not be enough; we shall have to organize four, or five, and for all I know, the day may come, unless we build more temples, when we shall keep the temples open twenty-four hours a day. We need more converts to temple work, drawn from all ages, from the young, from the middle-aged, and from the

rich and poor, from among the busy and those of leisure. The time has come, I verily believe, in this new temple movement, to bring into active service all the people, of all ages. From the children doing baptisms, to the aged grandparents doing endowments for the dead, all the members of the family, if we do our duty well, must be brought into the work. Temple work is quite of as much benefit to the young and the active, as it is to the aged, who have laid behind them many of the burdens of life. The young man needs his place in the temple even more than his father and his grandfather, who are steadied by a life of experience; and the young girl just entering life needs the spirit, influence and direction that comes from participation in the temple ordinances. If I say nothing else tonight that will linger, I hope you will remember that temple work is for the young and for the middle aged and for the aged for all and not for one specialized, separated class within the Church organization.

Historical Distribution of Temples.

What is a temple? According to the ordinary definition, it is any place set apart for sacred purposes and dedicated to a sacred purpose a house of God.

All people of all ages have had temples in one form or another. When the history of human thought shall be written from the point of view of temple worship, it may well be found that temples and the work done in them have been the dominating influence in shaping human thought from the beginning of the race. Even today political controversies are as nothing in determining the temple of a people, as compared with religious sentiments and convictions, especially as practiced in the temples of the people.

In every land and in every age temples have been built and used. In China, age old with four thousand years of written history; in India; on the islands of the sea; in South America; in North America; in Africa and in Australia; everywhere there are evidences of the existence and use of temples.

Temples of the Priesthood.

There is a fairly complete history of some of the temples of the priesthood, the temples built by the chosen people of God. There are evidences that even in patriarchal days, in the days of Adam, there was the equivalent of temples, for the priesthood was held in its fulness, as far as the people needed it; and there is every reason to believe that from Adam to Noah, temple worship was in operation. After the flood the Holy Priesthood was continued; and we have reason to believe, in sacred places, the ordinances of the temple were given to those entitled to receive them.

When Israel was in Egypt, the Priesthood was with them, and we may believe from certain sayings of the Scriptures that Israel had in Egypt a temple or its equivalent, the mysterious "testimony". When Israel was in the wilderness temple worship was provided for, for the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph (D. & C. 124:38):

"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."

In the tabernacle (or temple) of the wilderness, the ordinances of God's house were given to a

certain extent, as least, as we give them today.

I need not review with you the history of the temples of Israel, the temple of the wilderness of "tabernacle of the congregation," later placed at Shiloh; the temple of Solomon; the temple of Zerubbabel after the captivity; the restoration of this temple by Herod, and so on. We need simply remember that the story of ancient Israel, the chosen people of God, centers upon their temples.

The Book of Mormon indicates that from about 600 years B. C. until about 35 or 40 years A. D., temples, under the authority of the holy priesthood, were found on this continent. Nephi says distinctly that he proceeded to gather up all the precious things of the people and to build a temple according to the pattern of the temple of Solomon.

Temple Worship Eternally a Part of the Gospel.

When Joseph Smith was commissioned to restore the Gospel and to re-establish the Church of Jesus Christ, the building of temples and temple worship became almost the first and last issue of his life. The temple site in Independence, dedicated shortly after the organization of the Church; the building and completion of the Kirtland temple and the wonderful things that happened there; the building of the Nauvoo temple and the giving of endowments in the temple after the death of the Prophet; the dedication of other temple sites and many revelations concerning temples, indicate, altogether, that the main concern of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the restoration of the Gospel in these latter days was the founding, building, and completion of temples in which the ordinances "hid from before the foundation of the world" might be given. In fact, the Lord declared repeatedly to the Prophet that unless temple were built and used, the plan of salvation could neither be in full operation nor fully accomplished.

Let me suggest that the reason why temple building and temple worship have been found in every age, on every hand, and among every people, is because the gospel in its fullness was revealed to Adam, and that all religions and religious practices are therefore derived from the remnants of the truth given to Adam and transmitted by him to the patriarchs. The ordinances of the temple in so far as then necessary, were given, no doubt, in those early days, and very naturally corruptions of them have been handed down the ages. Those who understand the eternal nature of the gospel planned before the foundation of the earth understand clearly why all history seems to revolve about the building and use of temples.

Eternal Nature of Man.

To understand the meaning of temple worship, it is necessary to understand the plan of salvation and its relation to temple worship. The human race were "in the beginning with God," and were created spiritual beings in a day before the arrival upon this earth. Mankind is here because of its acceptance of the Plan of Salvation, and satisfactory pre-existent lives. We have won the right to be here; we have not been forced to come here; we have won our place upon the earth. We shall pass into another sphere of existence, and shall continue upward and onward forever and forever, if we obey the high laws of eternal existence.

The plan of salvation for eternal beings involves the principle that God's work with respect to this earth will not be complete until every soul has been taught the Gospel and has been offered the privilege of accepting salvation and the accompanying great blessings which the Lord has in store

for his children. Until that is done the work is unfinished.

Men frequently as when the last day shall come and when the earth shall go through its great change. Men attempt uselessly to figure out the dates of the coming events from the sayings of Daniel and the other prophets. We know that the Lord will come when we are ready to receive him; that is when we have done the work he required of us; not before, not later; but when the labor of the day has been accomplished, the present day will end and a new stage of action will be set. When the work assigned to the earth children has been done in accordance with the Plan of Salvation, the Lord will remember his promises, and the end of the earth, which is the beginning of a new day of advancement, will occur.

We who travel the earth journey are working out an eternal problem. An endless journey is ours, the earth life is a fraction of it; the purpose is unending.

Conditions of Eternal Progress.

It has been ordained that to follow the path God has laid out for us, we must have faith, we must repent, and we must show our obedience by going into the waters of baptism, and then as our great reward we shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Some people, having obeyed these first principles, believe their work done. They have found entrance into the Church, they are members of God's chosen people what more need they? In fact, however, the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to the Prophet Joseph Smith, is a promise of increasing intelligence, it is a beginning of things to be. It is a promise of larger, fuller knowledge, of something new, more wonderful, and vaster, in its intent and purpose than anything that we have known before. It is a promise of growth into a larger life and a larger condition of life. In my opinion, the gift of the Holy Ghost which implies a promise of added intelligence is realized in part at least in the worship and ordinances of the temples of the Lord. The request of the soul, which leads a man into obedience of the first principles, is answered by one method through the institution of the eternal ordinances which all the faithful may enjoy.

Salvation vs. Exaltation.

Through obedience to the first principles of the Gospel, and a subsequent blameless life, a person may win salvation for himself. But in God's kingdom are many gradations, which lead to exaltation upon exaltation. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and labor for the fulfillment of the promise involved in the gift of the Holy Ghost will advance farther than those who placidly sit by with no driving desire within them. Temple worship is an avenue to exaltation in God's kingdom.

God's Definition of a Temple.

God's definition of a temple is given over and over again in this good book, the Doctrine and Covenants. A temple is a place in which those whom he has chosen are endowed with power from on high. And what is power? Knowledge made alive and useful that is intelligence; and intelligence in action that is power. Our temples give us power a power based on enlarged knowledge and intelligence a power from on high of a quality with God's own power.

Purposes of Temples.

This is accomplished through the various purposes of temples. A temple is a place where God will come; a place where the pure in heart shall see God; a place where baptisms for the dead are performed; a place where the endowment of the priesthood is given; a place where the keys of the priesthood are committed in abundance; and a place where many other wonderful things may occur and should occur and in fact do occur.

***Communion of God and man.* It is a great promise that to the temples God will come, and that in them man shall see God. What does this promised communion mean? Does it mean that once in a while God may come into the temples, and that once in a while the pure in heart may see God there; or does it mean the larger thing, that the pure in heart who go into the temples, may, there by the Spirit of God, always have a wonderfully rich communion with God? I think that is what it means to me and to you and to most of us. We have gone into these holy houses, with our minds freed from the ordinary earthly cares, and have literally felt the presence of God. In this way, the temples are always places where God manifests himself to man and increases his intelligence. A Temple is a place of revelation.**

***Baptisms for the Dead.* Baptism for the dead will be discussed in all probability tomorrow night by Elder Smith. The ordinance of baptism for the dead fits into the scheme of salvation. It is an acknowledgement of itself that the whole plan is eternal, and that the past, the present and the future are parts of one continuous whole. Were the life of man discontinuous there would be no need of labors for the dead.**

***Sealings.* Sealings, for time and eternity, have the purpose of tying together father and son, mother and daughter, the living and the dead, from age to age. In addition it emphasizes the authority of the priesthood. No merely earthly power could accomplish a union of a condition of this earth with a condition beyond this earth; a person of this life with a person of the life hereafter, or of the life before. When man contemplates the full meaning of the sealing ordinance if I may call it an ordinance he is overwhelmed with the boundless power that it implies and the weight of authority that it represents. The mere words of sealing may be easily spoken at the altars of the holy temples, but they are so full of meaning that any man with even a particle of imagination who witnesses or participates in the sealing ordinance must be overcome with the feeling of responsibility and opportunity and enjoyment that it carries with it.**

***The endowment.* In the wonderful section 124, of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord has described the work to be done in the temples, including the holy endowment:**

"For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead--

"For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. . . .

"For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory. . . .

"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 revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name."

At first reading the full meaning may not be clear, yet in these few verses lie the germs of practically everything that belongs to and is done in the house of the Lord. Dr. James E. Talmadge, under authority of the Church, has also discussed the meaning of endowment, in the book called The House of the Lord. I will read a part of it.

"The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction relating to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. This course of instruction includes a recital of the most prominent events of the creative period, the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat, the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned, the period of the great apostasy, the restoration of the Gospel with all its ancient powers and privileges, the absolute and indispensable condition of personal purity and devotion to the right in present life, and a strict compliance with Gospel requirements.

"As will be shown, the temples erected by the Latter-day Saints provide for the giving of these instructions in separate rooms, each devoted to a particular part of the course; and by this provision it is possible to have several classes under instruction at one time.

"The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions.

"No jot, iota, or tittle of the temple rites is otherwise than uplifting and sanctifying. In every detail the endowment ceremony contributes to covenants of morality of life, consecration of person to high ideals, devotion to truth, patriotism to nation, and allegiance to God. The blessings of the House of the Lord are restricted to no privileged class; every members of the Church may have admission to the temple with the right to participate in the ordinances thereof, if he comes duly accredited as of worthy life and conduct."

In no part of the temple service is the spirit of the purpose of temple worship so completely shown

as in the endowment.

Internal Evidence of Veracity.

I desire to leave with you as the next thought that the work done in temples brings to those of pure and sincere hearts the evidence of its veracity. This is said in view of the question so often asked, is there anything in the temple ordinances themselves that speaks for their truth.

The temple ordinances encompass the whole plan of salvation as taught from time to time by the leaders of the Church, and elucidate matters difficult of understanding. There is no warping or twisting in fitting the temple teachings into the great scheme of salvation. The philosophical completeness of the endowment is one of the great arguments for the veracity of the temple ordinances. Moreover, this completeness of survey and expounding of the Gospel plan, makes temple worship one of the most effective methods of refreshing the memory concerning the whole structure of the Gospel.

Another fact has always appealed to me as a strong internal evidence for the truth of temple work. The endowment and the temple work as revealed by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see also Doctor Talmage's *The House of the Lord*) fall clearly into four distinct parts: the preparatory ordinances, the giving of instructions by lectures and representations; covenants; and, finally, tests of knowledge. I doubt that the Prophet Joseph, unlearned and untrained in logic, could of himself have made the thing so logically complete. The candidate for the temple service is prepared, as in any earthly affair, for work to be done. Once prepared he is instructed in the things that he should know. When instructed, he covenants to use the imparted knowledge, and at once the new knowledge, which of itself is dead, leaps into living life. At last, tests are given him, whereby those who are entitled to know may determine whether the man has properly learned the lesson. The brethren and sisters who go through the temple should observe all these things and recognize the wonderful coherence and logical nature of the carefully worked out system, with a beginning and an end, fitting every known law of God and nature, which constitutes temple worship.

The wonderful pedagogy of the temple service, especially appealing to me as a professional teacher, carries with it evidence of the truth of temple work. We go to the temple to be informed and directed, to be built up and to be blessed. How is all this accomplished? First by the spoken word, through lectures and conversations, just as we do in the class room, except with more elaborate care, then by the appeal to the eye by representations by living, moving beings; and by pictorial representations in the wonderfully decorated rooms (as any one may see in Dr. Talmage's book.) Meanwhile the recipients themselves, the candidates for blessings, engage actively in the temple service as they move from room to room, with the progress of the course of instruction. Altogether our temple worship follows a most excellent pedagogical system. I wish instruction were given so well in every school throughout the land, for we would then teach with more effect than we now do.

For these reasons, among many others, I have always felt that temple work is a direct evidence of the truth of the word reestablished by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It may be that the temple endowment and the other temple ordinances form the strongest available evidence of the divine inspiration of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Objections to Temple Worship.

I said near the beginning of this address that with any increase in temple activity we must expect a new and vigorous opposition to temple work, from evil forces, which however will be wholly subdued if the work is continued. This opposition will not wholly come from without; some will come from within the Church. Unfortunately, that is also a natural law. Young people and sometimes older people, will question this or that thing about the temple service. "Is this or that necessary?" "Is this or that thing reasonable?" "Why should I do this or that?" Even though such questions should be needless, it is best to answer them, especially if they are asked by those who are untrained and inexperienced, and therefore unable to think clearly for themselves.

Why a House?

The objection is sometimes raised that a house is not needed for temple worship. "Why should a house be required, when God is everywhere, the God who made the trees and the mountains and the valleys?" "Why should God require the poor saints in Illinois and Ohio and Missouri, to build temples at tremendous expense?" Of course the Lord does not need a house, and temple work may be done elsewhere than in a house. The Lord has specifically stated that under certain conditions the temple endowment may be given on the tops of the mountains, but as men multiply upon the face of the earth, it will be increasingly difficult to conduct temple worship, except in especially dedicated places away from the multitude and the chaos and the rattle and the disturbance of ordinary life.

The holy endowment is deeply symbolic. "Going through the temple" is not a very good phrase; for temple worship implies a great effort of mind and concentration if we are to understand the mighty symbols that pass in review before us. Everything must be arranged to attune our hearts, our minds, and our souls to the work. Everything about us must contribute to the peace of mind that enables us to study and to understand the mysteries, if you choose, that are unfolded before us. We would not give our family dinners out of doors, in the crowd; why should anyone ask us to do our most sacred work in the face of the crowd.

Sacred vs. Secret.

Some young persons do not like temple work "because the things done in it are secret, and we do not believe in secret things, we want to stand in the sunshine." In fact, there is nothing secret about the temple. I have found nothing secret in or about our temples; I have found many things that are sacred. There is a vast difference between things secret and things sacred the thing hidden away from the light, and the thing sacred, which plays in the light and is protected from darkness and impurity and all unworthy conditions.

God has declared that he will not enter a defiled temple, whether that temple be the body of a man or a dedicated grove or a mountain top, or a house, like the temple on these grounds. The Holy Spirit will withdraw from a defiled place. People who have no faith in temple worship, who desire simply as tourists to inspect unsympathetically our holy house, in spite of themselves defile it. We desire to present our temple ordinances to those who are believers. Moreover, visitors in temples would interfere with the procedure of the work. Of itself there is no reason why at proper times the temple may not be inspected.

Covenants and Promises.

Many young people object to temple work because, "We must make covenants and promises and we do not like to be tied; we want full freedom." This objection arises from a misunderstanding of the meaning of covenants. Knowledge become serviceable only when it is used; the covenant made in the temple, or elsewhere, if of the right kind, is merely a promise to give life to knowledge, by making knowledge useful and helpful in man's daily progress. Temple work, or any other work, would have no meaning unless accompanied with covenants. It would consist simply of bits of information for ornament; the covenant gives life to truth, and makes possible the blessings that reward all those who use knowledge properly; or the penalties that overtake those who misuse knowledge. That knowledge of itself is valueless, and that its use or misuse brings about inevitable results are the a b c of every scientific laboratory. The electric current properly used lights this building; improperly used, it may go through the body of the man and leave death behind. Unused, the electric current is to the man as if it were not. Penalties and rewards hang upon the use of knowledge.

Lack of Beauty.

Others say that the temple ordinances are unbeautiful. Some young man ready for a mission, or some young lady just married says "It is unbeautiful, I did not enjoy it." Again the misunderstanding. They have gone through the temple looking at the outward form and not the inner meaning of things. The form of the endowment is of earthly nature, but it symbolizes great spiritual truths. All that we do on this earth is earthly, but all is symbolic of great spiritual truths. To build this temple, earth had to be dug, wood had to be cut; stone was quarried and brought down the canyon. It was dusty and dirty work and made us sweat it was of this earth yet it was the necessary preparation for the mighty spiritual ordinances that are carried on daily in this magnificent temple. The endowment itself is symbolic; it is a series of symbols of vast realities, too vast for full understanding. Those who go through the temple and come out feeling the service is unbeautiful have been so occupied with the outward form, as to fail to understand the inner meaning. It is the meaning of things that counts in life.

Symbolism.

This brings me to a few words concerning symbolism. We live in a world of symbols. We know nothing, except by symbols. We make a few marks on a sheet of paper, and we say that they form a word, which stands for love, or hate, or charity, or God or eternity. The marks may not be very beautiful to the eye. No one finds fault with the symbols on the pages of a book because they are not as mighty in their own beauty and the things which they represent. We do not quarrel with the symbol G-o-d because it is not very beautiful, yet represents the majesty of God. We are glad to have symbols, if only the meaning of the symbols is brought home to us. I speak to you tonight; you have not quarreled very much with my manner of delivery, or my choice of words; in following the meaning of the thoughts I have tried to bring home to you, you have forgotten words and manner. There are men who object to Santa Claus, because he does not exist! Such men need spectacles to see that Santa Claus is a symbol; a symbol of the love and joy of Christmas and the Christmas spirit. In the land of my birth there was no Santa Claus, but a little goat was shoved into the room, carrying with it a basket of Christmas toys and gifts. The goat of itself counted for nothing; but the Christmas spirit, which it symbolized, counted for a tremendous lot.

We live in a world of symbols. No man or woman can come out of the temple endowed as he should be, unless he has seen, beyond the symbol, the mighty realities for which the symbols stand.

Corruptions of Temple Worship.

Many apostates have tried to reveal the ordinances of the House of the Lord. Some of their accounts form a fairly complete and correct story of the outward form of the temple service; but they are pitiful failures in making clear the eternal meaning of temple worship and the exaltation of the spirit that is awakened by the understanding of that meaning. Such attempts are only words; symbols without meaning. Is anything more lifeless than a symbol of an unknown meaning?

Such attempted improper revelations of temple worship have led in all ages to corruptions of temple ordinances. The fact that such corruptions of ordinances and ceremonies have always existed is a strong evidence of the continuity of temple worship, under the priesthood, from the days of Adam. Sister Gates handed me this afternoon a quotation from a book that she had picked up, in which it is related that Moses adopted a holy garment from Jethro, which he wore, and in turn communicated it to his brother Aaron, who adopted it and who in turn communicated it to the priests of Israel; from whom in turn it was taken in some form by the priests of false gods. Such corruptions of temple worship are found everywhere; but they are poor lifeless imitations, symbols from which the meaning has been wrested.

The Revelation of the Temple.

If we are correct in believing that the blessings obtained in the temples of the Lord are a partial fulfillment, at least, of the promise made when the Holy Ghost, who is a Revelator, is conferred upon man, it would be expected that temple ordinances would be in the nature of a revelation to those who participate. Certainly the temple is a place where revelations may be expected.

But whether in the temple or elsewhere, how do men receive revelations? How did the Prophet Joseph Smith obtain his first revelation, his first vision? He desired something. In the woods, away from human confusion, he summoned all the strength of his nature; there he fought the demon of evil, and, at length, because of the strength of his desire and the great effort that he made, the Father and the Son descended out of the heavens and spoke eternal truth to him. So revelation always comes; it is not imposed upon a person; it must be drawn to us by faith, seeking and working. Just so; to the man or woman who goes through the temple with open eyes, heeding the symbols and the covenants, and making a steady, continuous effort to understand the full meaning, God speaks his word and revelations come. The endowment is so richly symbolic that only a fool would attempt to describe it; it is so packed full of revelations to those who exercise their strength to seek and see, that no human words can explain or make clear the possibilities that reside in the temple service. The endowment which was given by revelation can best be understood by revelation; and to those who seek most vigorously, with pure hearts, will the revelation be greatest. I believe that the busy person on the farm, in the shop, in the office, or in the household, who has his worries and troubles, can solve his problems better and more quickly in the house of the Lord than anywhere else. If he will leave his problems behind and in the temple work for himself and for his dead, he will confer a mighty blessing upon those who have gone before, and quite as large a blessing will come to him, for at the most unexpected moments, in or out of the temple will come to him, as a revelation, the solution of the problems that vex his life. That is the

gift that comes to those who enter the temple properly, because it is a place where revelations may be expected. I bear my personal testimony that this is so.

In temple worship, as in all else, we probably gain understanding according to our differing knowledge and capacity; but I believe that we can increase in knowledge and enlarge our capacity, and in that way receive greater gifts from God. I would therefore urge upon you that we teach those who go into the temples to do so with a strong desire to have God's will revealed to them, for comfort, peace, and success in our daily lives, not for publication, or for conversation, but for our own good, for the satisfying of our hearts.

Preparation for Temple Worship.

Colonel Willard Young said last night, in casual conversation, that we should give more attention to preparing our young people and some of the older people, for the work they are to do in the temple. He is undoubtedly right in his view. It is not quite fair to let the young girl or young man enter the temple unprepared, unwarned, if you choose, with no explanation of the glorious possibilities of the first fine day in the temple. Neither is it quite fair to pass opinion on temple worship after one day's participation followed by an absence of many year. The work should be repeated several times in quick succession, so that the lessons of the temple may be fastened upon the mind.

Conclusion.

The beginning and the end of the Gospel is written, from one point of view, in Section 2 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. If I read this section correctly, the work which in part has been committed by the Church to this Society is the keystone of the wonderful Gospel arch. If this center stone is weakened, and falls out, the whole arch falls into a heap of unorganized doctrinal blocks. It is a high privilege for young or old to be allowed to enter the House of the Lord, there to serve God and to win power.

I hope that temple worship will increase in our midst, that we shall have a finer understanding of its meaning, and that more temple may be built to supply the demands of the living and the dead, and to hasten the coming of the great day of the Lord.

May the Lord bless us in this work, I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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