

# **Temples the Gates of Heaven—Feelings and Reflections—Around in the Temple—The Work Before the Saints—Sayings of the Savior As to Marriage in the Resurrection Explained—Glorious Hopes Inspired By the Gospel—Enoch and His City—The Three Nephites and John**

*Discourse by Apostle F. D. Richards, delivered in the Tabernacle, Logan, Cache County, Saturday Afternoon (Quarterly Conference), May 17, 1884.*

I scarcely know how to find words to express the feelings which occupy my bosom at this time. This is one of those extraordinary occasions on which the Priesthood of the Church of the last dispensation are gathered together; a great thanksgiving day for God's people. It is an assemblage of the authorities of the Church from the Stakes of Zion. They have come together to rejoice, to give God thanks, to praise and to magnify His name because another great and peculiar blessing is bestowed upon His people—that of erecting, completing and furnishing another house unto the Lord, and of dedicating it unto Him.

The Temples, the houses of our God, when acceptably dedicated, become to us the gates of heaven. They are esteemed most holy unto the Lord of all places upon the earth; therein the faithful approach nearest unto God, and obtain the greatest fellowship and inspiration of His Holy Spirit. There the righteous perform ordinances that reach into the heavens and take effect upon their dead whom they love, whom they have loved, and who have gone before—to whom they owe a debt of gratitude, for their parentage—the authors of their being and education in the flesh; who have gone unto that other state of spiritual existence. It is fitting on such occasions that the Presidents and Bishops, with their Counselors, should come from the four quarters of the earth, if the knowledge of the Gospel and the organization of the Stakes of Zion had extended so far.

The dedication of the Temple this morning awakens anew in our souls a heavenly, family feeling. It arouses in us an interest that reaches not only over the extent of the work here upon the earth, but into the regions of eternal life in the spirit world. It inspires a feeling that we are part of them and that they are part of us, knowing that we cannot be made perfect without them, nor they without us. And it becomes like the opening up of the gate of heaven unto us, that we may view by the eye of faith, and by the light of the Holy Spirit, that portion of the family of God with whom we have before associated, and with whom we expect to be hereafter associated in greater and more glorious labors in His eternal kingdom here upon the earth; when sickness, sorrow, sin and death shall be cleansed from the face of it, and when life, salvation, peace and faith shall, as the fruits of the Spirit, be poured out upon all flesh.

While in the Temple with the chief authorities of the Church and Kingdom of God—which has now extended its operations and its labors to every continent, almost every mainland, and many islands of the sea—the reflection came forcibly to my mind that there are represented in our midst this day people from either Indies, from the Antipodes, and from the various nations of the earth; not less than twenty-five or thirty nationalities, languages, tongues and peoples are represented among us. The impression was irresistible that the fellowship of the heavens was near us, that our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ was near, and that His Spirit was largely in the midst of the congregation; that the spirit of our ancient fathers, Adam, Noah and Abraham, the father of the faithful, who the Revelations inform us has entered into his exaltation and sits upon his throne, were all earnestly interested in our offering and dedication of this Temple to the Most High God. The impression was constantly with me that we were in the presence of the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum, and others who had gone before, such as Brother David W. Patten, as well as Brigham, Heber, Willard, and others of the Apostles and worthies—that their spirits must have been present with us hallowing our reflections, imparting their peaceful influence and truthful inspiration to our souls. Our spirits were awakened to a profound sense of thankfulness that we had been enabled to take another so important a step of advancement in the triumphant progress of the great Latter-day work.

We are sensible that the heavenly powers are moved on these occasions, and we know that the Saints on earth

are. Indeed there is no theme that engages the human mind, and that reaches into the innermost recesses thereof as does Temple building, and the ideas associated with that work and the purposes for which they are used. It is this that animates the bosoms of the righteous and brings forth sentiments and emotions from the fountains of their souls, inspiring them with fresh resolutions to faith and good works. I thank the living God and praise His holy name that I have lived to see His work progress thus far upon the earth. I am thankful for the privilege of meeting with so many of my brethren in the Priesthood.

It is a pleasing thought, a glorious truth, that while we are here together in our persons, we are also united in spirit, we are firmly united, so far as we know, in our belief in the principles of the Gospel, and in all the labors assigned to us severally to perform. I do not recollect to have ever read in the Bible history of God's people on the earth, when His servants and His people wrought together, with greater unanimity of faith or with a more generous use of their means than now in all the labors and duties that devolve upon them. The favorable conditions attending us as a people, the peace and plenty there is in the land—the sweet fellowship of the Spirit, the glorious promises and prospects for the future, all draw from the fountain of our souls our best emotions, our strongest faith, our brightest hopes, our most glorious anticipations.

I have reflected upon the days of ancient Israel, and wondered at their decadence, when they had arrived at the height of glory and eminence. Solomon, their king, stood vastly above all the kings of the surrounding nations; he sat safely on his throne, for God sustained him there, until he departed from His counsels and commandments. Oh, what a terrible thing to happen to God's people, or to any of His servants! What was it that turned the scale and started the decay of that nation? It was simply because their ruler put forth his hand and took to himself wives of other nations, that God had commanded him not to. This was the beginning of the great mischief that came upon Israel, and one mischief led to another; they persuaded him to attend the sacrifices and worship of their idolatrous gods, as the Lord told him they would do, until the family of Israel had come to follow the example of their king—marrying strange women and worshipping strange gods, which brought them down to that terrible degradation that their temple, which was built in wisdom, strength and beauty most glorious, and which was acknowledged at its dedication by the presence and glory of God, had become polluted and degraded to a den of thieves. The Lord told them that their doom was sealed, and that in regard to the Temple, there should not be left one stone upon another to tell where it stood. O, what terrible consequences have followed through the ages until today! Even until now, that nation is afflicted and distressed. While it is well with us here, and we are enjoying all these blessings, it is but right, I think, that we should ask our Father in heaven that the day of their affliction and sorrow may soon come to an end, and that they may come, as we have come, with obedient hearts to help build up Zion and Jerusalem.

Our work is at present but small. It is but the beginning, the germination of the wonderfully strange work that is to affect the whole habitable globe, and not only those that are on the earth now, but all that have dwelt here or that shall come to dwell upon it, until the earth shall be made anew, and all things thereon pronounced new again from God. Although Israel had attained to great eminence and glory in the earth, yet they were brought into subjection to other nations because of their transgressions, and though Christ came to be their deliverer, they received Him not—and their Temple was not restored to those glorious and exalted purposes and uses for which it was intended; then what have been the consequences? The Savior told them what would come to pass. "Behold," said he, "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: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, etc." What a terrible consequence! If they could have but hearkened to His word, walked in the way of the Lord, continued in its holy course, and believed in the Savior when He came, then they might have been engaged in this work of redeeming their dead back to the beginning of the world, and there would have been a mighty work done by that generation for their dead, as well as for themselves; but it remains for those recent men and women now upon the earth and that shall come upon the earth to perform this labor.

My brethren and sisters, there is before us that which draws upon our faith and upon our prospective ambition and knowledge of Gospel labor clear back to the days of the ancients. The Lord has given us intimations in regard to all these things, and He will continue to reveal all things necessary to be made known by which His great purposes

shall be brought about. Great and glorious is His work! The work of the resurrection is not far off. I am fully persuaded of this, and have reflected sometimes concerning it, with an earnest desire. Never in all my ministry have I talked much about the resurrection; but the Lord has manifested some things concerning it, and I would like to allude to them.

It is a popular sentiment among professing Christians generally, and it is believed also by many of the Saints—because of a certain saying the Savior made use of to the Sadducees on a particular occasion—that, in neither of the resurrections is there to be any marrying or giving in marriage. This is a mistaken idea. We are nowhere informed that the Savior ever said any such thing or entertained any such doctrine. He taught the doctrine of the resurrection, saying that He was the resurrection and the life, and that the day will come when all they that are in their graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. It was because He taught this doctrine that the Sadducees sought to entangle and confuse Him concerning this principle by bringing up the case of the woman who married a man and he died without any children, then because he died childless she married his brother, which was according to the law of Moses, he also died without children, and so on, each of the brothers marrying her, until the seven brothers had her to wife, and last of all the woman died also.

These Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection, and they thought to be very crafty with the Savior, so they put the question squarely to Him: “Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.” They evidently thought they had caught the Savior then; but He replied to them saying: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” Now, who was He talking to? He was speaking to those Sadducees who denied there being any resurrection; who lived contemporaneously with the seven men and this woman who had lived and died among them. He was talking to a race of people to whom John the Baptist had come, and many had received his testimony; but these had not. He was talking to a people who claimed to be of the House of Israel, to whom He (Jesus) had come in fulfillment of the testimony of John the Baptist.

There had been sent among this people, whom he was now talking to, prophets who had foretold His coming and the coming of John the Baptist. He had sent His Twelve Apostles among all their cities, all of whom had testified to the coming of the Just One unto all that people, but they had rejected those testimonies, had killed the Prophets, stoned those who had been sent unto them, and were now ready to slay Him.

It was to this class of people, who were living under these circumstances, that He makes the answer saying, “For in the resurrection *they* neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are *as the angels of God in heaven*.” Luke the Evangelist, stating this case in his 20th chapter, says: “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But *they* which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world*, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are *equal unto the angels*; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” If we refer to the glorious vision which was shown to Joseph and Sidney on the 16th of February, 1832, as recorded in the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, last edition, we shall find the promised condition of these people, that the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one, for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in the telestial world; for these are they who are of Paul, Apollos and Cephas, some of Christ—Moses, Elias and others—but received not the Gospel, the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets nor the everlasting covenant, but are liars, sorcerers, adulterers and whoremongers, who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, when Christ the Lamb shall have finished His work, having subdued all unto Him. These receive not of His fullness, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of angels appointed to administer for them. Had *they* hearkened to the Prophets, the Apostles, the words of the Savior, and received the everlasting covenant, they would have been made heirs of God and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ, and would have been made heirs of the celestial world, with power to increase eternally, being Gods, even the sons of God, but now that they would not receive the Gospel, the Prophets, nor the everlasting covenant which they might have received, they can only become as the angels in heaven, who in *that world* neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are *equal to the angels in heaven*.

These are not they who inherit the celestial world, nor those who attain to the terrestrial, but they who suffer the judgment of God in the flesh. These are they who come forth in the last resurrection; they who attain to the

resurrection in that world, and are neither married nor are given in marriage, just as the revelations of God prescribe and show forth.

There is nothing in all this which says or intimates that those who come forth in either of the other resurrections shall not have the blessing in their resurrection and in their world, whether Celestial or Terrestrial, of being married and given in marriage. Let me ask what is to become of that portion of the human family that have gone down into their graves in past ages without having arrived at the age of puberty, or without having lived to years of accountability? What is to become of them? Are they not to be given the blessings of the New and Everlasting Covenant, to increase, multiply and attain to endless lives, and eternal increase in the covenant of Abraham? Undoubtedly, in the resurrection when they shall have regained their tabernacles, if they render the required obedience to the holy law of God. And who are the others that come forth in the second resurrection? Stop. Let me distinguish. The first resurrection was in the days of Jesus. Those who were resurrected with Him appeared many of them, we are told, in the streets of the holy city. That was the first resurrection. The second resurrection is the resurrection of the just, when Jesus shall come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, when they who sleep in Jesus will come with Him. Then will He bring the City of Enoch that has gone away in Terrestrial glory ever since it went to the heavens. Then will those children who have died in Christ—for they are redeemed in Christ from before the foundation of the world—come forth. Then, in the next resurrection, we are told, will come forth the honorable men of the earth who have lived according to the light they had. In this next resurrection will come forth the multitudes of the nations that have never had the Gospel—the heathen nations. They are candidates for the next resurrection, and when they come forth upon the earth, those of them who prove themselves worthy will they not have the opportunity to attain to all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant? If they are not to be married and given in marriage the Lord has not been pleased to tell us so. I anticipate that in that glorious day the work of performing all the ordinances and endowments for those who have not attained unto these privileges and blessings in the flesh, either by themselves or by proxy, will have that privilege, and the work will be carried on. That blessed epoch seems to dawn upon our view—that glorious period when the righteous will come forth, and while the wicked will sleep on another thousand years.

Let me remind you of another interesting feature in this allegory, and that is this: The Savior tells us that the terrestrial glory, or kingdom, is likened unto the glory of the moon, which is not of the brightness of the sun, neither of the smallness nor dimness of the stars. But those others who have no part in marrying or giving of marriage in the last resurrection, they become as stars, and even differ from each other in glory; but those in the terrestrial kingdom are those who will come forth at the time when Enoch comes back, when the Savior comes again to dwell upon the earth; when Father Abraham will be there with the Urim and Thummim to look after every son and daughter of his race; to make known all things that are needed to be known, and with them enter into their promised inheritance. Thus the people of God will go forward. They will go forward, like unto the new moon, increasing in knowledge and brightness and glory, until they come to a fullness of celestial glory. During the Millennium multitudes of people who have not heard the Gospel will hear and receive it and go forward into this glory, while those who will not go forward to a fullness will go back to that lesser glory which is likened unto the stars of heaven, for as the Prophet Isaiah says; “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

I did not think when I arose that I should be led to speak in this strain; but the fact is, upon these occasions the glories of the other worlds open up before us, and we cannot help thinking of them, and dwelling upon them unless we quench the Spirit.

But says one, I thought that all marriages were to be performed in mortality? In reply to that suggestion I would ask, How was it that Father Adam and Mother Eve were married while they were immortal? And if they could be married as immortal beings, why cannot their children just as well be? It will doubtless occupy the whole of that sabbath of rest the whole thousand years, and perhaps a period after, to do the work necessary for all the vast myriads of Adam’s children, so that they may be placed in a position to be judged according to men in the flesh, or according to the deeds done in the body.

Brethren and sisters, I rejoice exceedingly with you in this glorious Gospel. If there is anything on the earth that can satisfy the human soul in its desires for excellence, virtue, exaltation and greatness, it certainly is this Gospel of the kingdom. If there is anything in the world that can satisfy the hungry soul for knowledge, it is the revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, which open up continually line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little and there a little; indeed there is nothing else can satisfy the longing of the human soul. This will lead to the same blessing and glory which the Prophet Joseph told us Enoch had attained unto. He taught us that he and his city had attained in his day to a terrestrial glory, that they were enjoying that glory still. They attained unto the power of translation, that they might take their bodies and their city with them. The resurrection was not until Christ came and became the firstfruits of them that slept.

This view of the subject brings me to think and to speak a word in reference to the three Nephites. They wanted to tarry until Jesus came, and that they might He took them into the heavens and endowed them with the power of translation, probably in one of Enoch's temples, and brought them back to the earth. Thus they received power to live until the coming of the Son of Man. I believe He took them to Enoch's city and gave them their endowments there. I expect that in the city of Enoch there are temples; and when Enoch and his people come back, they will come back with their city, their temples, blessings and powers. The north country will yield up its multitude, with the Apostle John, who is looking after them. They also will come to Zion and receive their crowns at the hands of their brethren of Ephraim. There will also be nations here on the earth that have not received the Gospel, but who will receive it, and thus the work of God will go on in all its phases, for the living and for the dead.

It is a good thing to take a glimpse once in a while into, and contemplate the glories of the future. A few years ago, when the wolf stood at our doors, when we had hardly enough of the necessities of life to keep body and spirit together, we used to sing the song—"There's a good time coming." Behold! that time has come. This is one of those good times that we are celebrating today. Let us rejoice in the Lord our God. I think that every honest soul that is pure before the Lord can lift up his heart, and praise His holy name, that he has lived to see this day. The Lord help us that we may give to Him our best efforts in forwarding His work here on earth. I rejoice with all my soul and ask the blessing of the Lord to rest upon the Presidency of the Church, upon the Apostles, upon the Seventies, High Priests and all the quorums; also, that the Bishops may be filled with the spirit of justice, equity and truth. I also feel to bless you, my brethren and sisters, that the favor of God may be multiplied upon your persons, your families, your homes, your flocks and your herds, your possessions and your hopes. That we may prove faithful and attain to heaven's proffered blessings is my desire, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.