

PRESIDENT ANTHONY W. IVINS

My heart is full of gratitude and praise to the Lord, my brethren and sisters, as I stand before this vast congregation and observe what President Nibley just called my attention to, that it is made up largely of men. As I think of it, it would appear almost unnecessary that I express the thoughts which I desired to present to you. I shall read first from the words of the Prophet Zechariah, as I wish to make his words the basis of the brief remarks that I expect to make.

SPEAK THE TRUTH

“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

“And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.” (Zechariah 8:16-17.)

THE CHURCH CRITICISED

It is now nearly one hundred years since the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ was effected. Three years hence and a century will have elapsed since that event occurred. From the time of its organization the Church, and those who make up its membership, have been misunderstood and misrepresented.

The Church has been referred to as an organization founded upon a pernicious superstition and delusion, and the man who was chosen to be the instrument in the hands of the Lord in the opening of the present gospel dispensation and organization of the Church, as either a wilful imposter or a deluded incompetent.

Those who have identified themselves with the Church, and make up its membership, have been accused of establishing a new form of religion, a religion founded upon Mosaic law, following the creed of Islam, rather than the gospel plan as it was taught by the Redeemer of the world. They have been ridiculed, abused and persecuted, in some instances unto death.

At this period in the history of the Church, after its doctrines have been before the world for a century, and its history and accomplishments are, or should be, well understood, it would be supposed that these criticisms and misrepresentations would have ceased, and it is obvious that where they are resorted to, it is the result either of inexcusable ignorance, or wilful desire to deceive those who are not well informed as to the truth, which in either case would be wrong, because no one is justified in sitting in judgment upon another where the merits of the case are not understood, and wilfully to misrepresent the truth is a very grave offense.

That the campaign of misrepresentation, ridicule and abuse, the methods to which people always resort, when reason and argument fail, is still being vigorously prosecuted is evidenced by the following to which I desire to call your attention. These clippings from which I

am about to read are only a few from the many which I have collected during the past year.

AN EXAMPLE

"There are many signs," this speaker says, "having the appearance of being hopeful that the old 'Mormondom' known in the days of Brigham Young is crumbling and that a new system slightly nearer the Christian ideal is being built up. Many 'Mormons,' not of the old school, no longer regard Joseph Smith as a prophet with a mission from God, which Joseph Smith claimed, and many do not accept the present heads of the Church as called of God. The present leaders of the Church would not dare to represent themselves as the mouthpiece of God to the membership. Apostasy among the male portion of the membership is growing fast, and the Church would have been bankrupt seven years ago if it were not for the women and children who alone pay tithes."

The speaker held up to ridicule certain of the "Mormon" pioneers and made fun of what he deemed as the superstition of the "Mormon" doctrines. The alleged betrayal of women by "Mormons" was depicted as were methods which he declared existed early in Southern Utah history where the "Mormons" hurled Gentiles from the cliffs. The audience which listened to these remarks loudly applauded them.

A REPLY TO THE ACCUSATIONS

If these statements were true, my brethren and sisters, there might be some justification for the hope expressed by the minister who uttered them that the bulwarks of the Church are crumbling, that the time is coming, and is not far distant, when it will collapse, and the fond hopes of those who have opposed it from the beginning will be realized. But fortunately for the Church, and unfortunately for those who oppose it, this is not the case.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The inference that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a Christian organization is too absurd to require any extended comment. The foundation upon which the Church rests is faith in God the eternal Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which constitute the God-head. The Church teaches and its members testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that by him the worlds were created, and that through the redemption wrought out, because of the atonement which he made, all mankind are redeemed from death, the penalty which was pronounced upon our father Adam because of transgression, and that through obedience to the doctrines which he taught we may be redeemed from personal sin. We bear witness to the world that there is no other name under heaven, nor is there any other means by which man can attain to glory, exaltation and eternal life except through the medium of Christ our Lord.

APOSTASY NOT GROWING

If apostasy is growing fast we are not aware of it, and the careful record which is kept of those who become members of the Church, and those who withdraw from it, would certainly provide this information were it true. It is true that not all who obey the gospel and identify themselves with the Church remain steadfast in the faith, and it has always been so, but there are fewer in number who go back to the world and its devious paths than in the early history of the Church. A net cast into the sea, the Savior says, gathers fish of all kinds, and the Church in this dispensation does not differ from the Primitive Church in that respect.

TITHES ARE PAID BY MEN AND WOMEN

If the statement that only women and children pay tithes, and but for them the Church would have been bankrupt seven years ago is true, the women and children are entitled to great credit, for it chanced just at the time that this statement was made that the tithes paid showed greater returns for the year than ever before in the history of the Church.

STRONG BELIEF IN THE DIVINE MISSION OF JOSEPH SMITH

If it is true, as stated, that the members of the Church no longer regard Joseph Smith as a prophet, with a message from God to the people of the world, and that the men who preside over the Church are no longer recognized as the mouthpiece of the Lord to the membership, then indeed are we without hope, for we are immediately reduced to the condition of these critics. The Lord has declared that where there is no revelation and prophecy the people perish.

Never before since the organization of the Church has there been such overwhelming proof of the divine calling of the prophet Joseph Smith, and the inspiration of his successors in office as at the present time, for the past century has not proved him, or them, to have been wrong, while it has added greatly to the evidence which existed at the time the Church was founded, both from a scriptural and historical point of view to prove that he was divinely called to do the work which he accomplished.

PROPHECIES ON THE LATTER-DAY DISPENSATION

During his personal ministry but few people accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world. Notwithstanding the fact that the Jewish people were looking forward to the coming of their Messiah, they rejected Christ, and have vainly looked forward for the coming of another since the time of his appearing. Another has not come, and will not come until he shall return to reign in power, majesty and dominion upon the earth. Then, and not until then, will Judah fully appreciate the error of his rejection.

Just as definitely as the prophets had foretold the coming of the

Christ, and the work which he was to accomplish, the greatest accomplishment since the creation of man, for it involved the redemption of mankind from the fallen condition into which transgression had plunged them, so definitely did they foretell the coming of another epochal event, second only to the appearance of the Messiah himself.

The time of its accomplishment was at a period referred to as the latter days, a time when spiritual darkness would cover the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people. A time when the laws of the gospel of Christ would be transgressed, the ordinances of his Church changed, and the everlasting covenant broken.

At this time, when these conditions prevailed, the Lord, just prior to his crucifixion, declared to his disciples that a light would break forth among those who sit in darkness, which light would be the fulness of his everlasting gospel, a light which the people of the world at large would not perceive, and from which they would turn because of the precepts of men.

John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, looking forward to that time, tells us that the opening of this greatest of all gospel dispensations, greatest because the Lord has said that in it he will gather all things together in one, and consummate his work, would be ushered in by an angel whom he saw flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

While the primary purpose of this restoration was to prepare the world for the second coming of the Redeemer, and bring all people, Jew and Gentile, atheist, infidel and professed Christian, to recognition of Christ as the Redeemer of the world, and submission to his will, there were certain well defined purposes to be accomplished before this is to be consummated.

Scattered Israel is to be gathered and established in the land given to them to be an everlasting inheritance, in accordance with the promise made by the Lord to Abraham, and repeated to his sons Isaac and Jacob. The promise sealed upon the head of Joseph, the son of Jacob, when the latter sealed the heirship of that branch upon the head of Ephraim, and extended the promise which had already been made to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, a promise which is being fulfilled, as witnessed in the coming together of this great congregation, whose genealogy traces direct to Ephraim. Judah is to re-possess Palestine, the Promised Land of his fathers. The mountain of the Lord's house is to be established in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and many people are to be gathered to it in order that they may be taught the way of the Lord, and learn to walk in his paths.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the House of Israel, says :

"Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.
* * * And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is

sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Referring to the same period the prophet Ezekiel says:

"Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand."

THE PROPHECIES FULFILLED

If the events, to which the scripture, to which I have referred, have not occurred, if Ephraim is not being gathered to the tops of the mountains, where they are being taught the way of the Lord that they may walk in his paths, if the Jews are not beginning to re-possess Palestine, the Promised land, if the house of Israel has not been brought down, and has spoken low out of the dust, with the voice of a familiar spirit, if an angel has not restored the everlasting gospel to be preached to all nations, if the record of Judah and of Ephraim have not come together for the purpose of uniting the entire Israelitish family, if these things have not occurred I say, then we must look to the future for their accomplishment, for they are the unchangeable decrees of the Lord, and his word never fails.

The Lord has said that the record which was delivered to Joseph Smith, and which was translated by him, and published to the world as the Book of Mormon, was the record of the stick of Ephraim. The Bible is the record of the hand-dealing of the Lord with the House of Judah. The two have been brought together to the confounding of false doctrine, both bearing witness, as they do, to the divine mission of Christ our Lord.

When the keys of the Lesser Priesthood were conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and later the Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James and John, the words of John the divine were fulfilled, for authority was restored to earth to preach the gospel in its fulness, and administer all of the ordinances of the Church.

OUR CLAIM, TESTIMONY AND APPEAL

The restored Church has never resorted to ridicule, abuse or misrepresentation. It has never persecuted any person because of his or her religious belief, nor any person because he had no religious con-

victions. It is true that its members have been drawn from other denominations, and from among people who were not professors of religion at all. We pray for all men who seek to do good, for it is a part of our creed that everything which is good, or induces men to do good cometh of God.

We do, however, claim the right to carry the message of the restored gospel to all men; it is our mission, as it was the mission of the disciples of Christ. Go ye into all the world, he said to his disciples, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

We bear testimony to all people that Joseph Smith was divinely called to the work which he accomplished. That he was not an imposter, but a chosen vessel of the Lord. That he did receive the plates which contained the record of the Book of Mormon, and translated them by the gift and power of God. We do not expect all people to accept the message which we bear, it would be contrary to prophecy if they did.

We do, however, appeal to those who differ from us to speak the truth, that honest men and women be not led astray by their sophistry and misrepresentations. Time will determine who is right, and we abide the verdict of the future for our vindication.

May the Lord our God keep us all in the path of truth, righteousness, and virtue, I humbly pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

Telephone calls from various parts of the state report exceptionally fine radio reception this morning. Reports from Provo are to the effect that the lower floor of the Provo tabernacle is crowded and the people are hearing every word.

The Tabernacle choir sang, "The Inflammatus," Laurinda Brewerton, soloist.

The closing prayer was offered by Elder H. Melvin Rollins, president of the Lyman stake.

The conference adjourned until 2 p. m.

AFTERNOON MEETING

President Heber J. Grant, promptly at 2 o'clock p. m., announced that the choir and congregation would sing the hymn, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning."

After the singing the invocation was offered by Elder James Robert Price, president of the Maricopa stake of Zion.

The choir sang the anthem, "Grant us peace."