

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

During the noon hour, I called upon Brother Richard R. Lyman. He is detained at home by sickness. He asked me to convey to the conference his love and blessing. I do so cheerfully, because I know of the depth of his feeling and regard for you, my brethren and sisters, and for the work of the Church.

I know that the few moments which remain, the short time in which to conclude this conference, are very precious, and I shall be grateful indeed if I may leave just a thought, prompted by the proper spirit, as a contribution to the great work of the Church. I have been thrilled and inspired, as I am sure you have all been, by the testimonies which have been given and the splendid remarks which have been made.

INTELLIGENT RESPONSE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE SPEAKERS

I have studied with some care the various congregations which have assembled during the conference. I have looked into the faces of these men who sit near the stand, many of whom I have the honor to know. I have seen in their countenances the impressions which have been made by the inspiring discourses, and I have noted that throughout the building on all the occasions when meetings have been held, great interest has been given to the proceedings. It is apparent that those who have gathered have responded to the spirit of the speakers and to the great truths to which utterance has been given.

THERE ARE THE WAYWARD, THE CARELESS, THE INDIFFERENT

As I have observed these congregations I have continually thought of an imaginary congregation which, perchance, might be assembled in this great building. I have thought, and I regret that my belief is that it is true, that this building could be filled with another congregation of members of the Church made up of those who are indifferent, who are wayward, who are careless and negligent, and whose hearts and spirits do not respond to the message of truth as do yours. I have thought of these men and women who have come from good families, whose fathers and mothers have in some instances been the very pillars of the Church, and I have wondered, if such a congregation were assembled, just what we would say to them and just how we would endeavor to reach them with these great truths which are embraced within the gospel of Christ.

OUR OBLIGATION TO INTERPRET THE GOSPEL TO THE NEGLIGENT

These who are wayward and indifferent are scattered all through the stakes of Zion and the wards of the Church. Unfortunately there is scarcely a single family where there is not some problem, in which there is not someone who does not think and feel quite as the faithful think and feel, and to whom it is difficult to give interpretations of the gospel that may appeal. I would like to say that while I regard our

greatest work to be the proclamation of the gospel abroad to the peoples of the earth, that men may know of the truth and be persuaded to come to the fold of Christ, nevertheless, I fully believe that our obligation to take and interpret the gospel to those who have in some measure at least departed from the faith, is of almost equal importance, and I appeal to the men who preside over the stakes and the missions and the wards, and who administer in the various organizations of the Church, to do all that lies within their power to make the organizations of the Church reach this great multitude of good people who are worth reclaiming, in whose blood courses that tendency to faith that comes from good ancestry. I sometimes think that it is infinitely more important to retain for the Church fine, intelligent men and women, whose fathers and mothers have been associated with the Church, than it is to secure others from distant lands. I believe that the message of the gospel will touch these people if we can but interpret it in terms that they can understand, and if we can induce them to open up their hearts to a reception of its great truths.

CHANGES IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD AND THE WAYS OF THOUGHT

Great changes have come to us in comparatively few years. Only a short time ago, within my own lifetime, changes of so tremendous a character and import have come as not only to have revolutionized the physical world, but in my judgment, to have very largely changed men's attitude and way of thinking. My grandfather came with the pioneers in 1847. He did not live seven years after coming here. I thought that if he were to return to this valley, and with nothing but mortal eyes and wisdom were to see the city and all that has here been made, it would be beyond his recognition. I wonder if changes comparable to that have not come about in the ways and thoughts of youth. Surely they are not able to escape the influence of their environment. Men today worship at the altar of success pretty much in a godless way. We have come out of the world, it is true, but the world have come in among us. And they have brought to us their practices and their ideals. We are subject to their influence. It is impossible to prevent men and women from responding in some degree to the influences which surround them. Science has revolutionized our lives. It affords us conveniences and utilities which we use, and we are not so dependent upon divine aid as once we were.

A PIONEER EXPERIENCE—SHE DEPENDED ON GOD

I recall a few years ago visiting with an old lady in the southern part of the state. She was then ninety-two years old. She had been a pioneer, and in my conversation with her she gave me some of her experiences. She said that during the early days she and her family were for weeks without food. "For one period of three weeks," she said, "we lived entirely on nettles." I said: "Nettles, what do you mean by nettles?" She said: "Just the common stinging nettles that

grow by the ditchbanks." I said: "How could you do it?" "Well," she said, "some way or other we got along. We were so interested in the great work going forward, our faith was such that we managed." One day, however, she said her two little girls came to her and said: "Mama, can't we have a little bread? Right there I went upon my knees," she said, "and I prayed God that he would grant a little bread to those two children. No sooner had I arisen from my knees than a knock came at the door and there stood a neighbor. In her hands she held two slices of bread and a can of milk. She said: 'Sister, I thought perhaps your little ones might need this, and I brought it to them.'" She believed that her prayer had been answered. I do! She depended upon God.

JUST AS NECESSARY TO APPEAL FOR DIVINE PROTECTION TODAY

But today we do not depend upon God for bread, at least we do not think we do, but we do depend upon him for the bread of life. We depend upon him for inspiration, and it is just as necessary, if we could only make our youth believe it, to appeal today for divine protection and guidance as it was in those early days to make appeal for the sustenance of life.

NEED OF INTERPRETING THE GOSPEL IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUTH

Our boys and girls through their education have in many instances reached an independence of all these sacred things, the things which meant so much to their fathers and their mothers; and my observation is that one of the things most needed today is an interpretation of the gospel in the language of these boys and these girls, so that they may understand its vitality and its import to them. All the facilities of the Church, all the work that we can do, in my judgment, should be directed to the saving of these priceless assets of the Church and of the Nation, and of ourselves—our children. I want them to have a testimony which I know is the most valuable thing that can come to them. I wish they all could have heard the testimonies that have been uttered in this conference. I feel sure that the impression of the spirit would have been helpful to them.

TESTIMONY

I bear my testimony that I know that this is the work of God. I wish I could deliver it to every young man and every young woman, to every wayward man and wayward woman in the entire Church. I know it just as confidently, just as surely, as I know any other fact that has entered into my life. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God. All of my feelings, every sensation that I can interpret, bears witness of that truth to me. I know that it is the Holy Ghost that makes that knowledge certain. I know, too, that that knowledge will come to every honest man and woman and to every young man and woman who strives for it and who lives for it, but I

want us all to help in every way that we can to bring that knowledge to the youth of our Church, and to all those who have fallen by the wayside. I am grateful for that knowledge. It brings into my life more comfort, more satisfaction, more hope, more that is worth striving for, than all else, and I am very desirous that I may live to be worthy of a continuation of that testimony, that it may grow and ripen and strengthen within me.

My grandfather was with the Prophet Joseph in Carthage jail. He was his intimate friend; he was his confidential secretary. He knew his thoughts, I believe, as well as one man may know the thoughts of another. He loved him. He was perfectly willing to give his life for the prophet. My grandfather has left his testimony that Joseph Smith was divinely chosen, that he was indeed a prophet of God, and I know that he did not lie, and I know that hundreds of other good men who knew this prophet have not falsified when they have given their testimony of his divine work.

God grant that the testimony of this latter-day work may come not only to the great hosts of faithful Saints who, from season to season, gather here to hear the word of the Lord, but to these hosts of worthy men and women who should be saved, who have strayed from the path of truth. I feel for one to consecrate my efforts to their reclamation and retention in the fold of Christ, and I know that could you speak here you would join in such a dedication. God bless you, my brethren and sisters, that you may carry forward this great and wonderful work to its glorious destiny, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

I am happy, my brethren and sisters, to find myself in full accord with all that has been said in this important conference, and earnestly do I desire to add my testimony to those which have been borne, and to speak of one or two items, that have already been referred to, which have been weighing very heavily upon my own mind for more than a year past. I believe that this representative gathering of Latter-day Saints is an opportunity for the messages that have been delivered by the President of the Church and his associates to be carried, in the spirit of these instructions, to the various stakes of Zion.

MEETING THE TESTING TIME

I wish to read a few verses from the 115th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord said to his Church, in 1838:

“Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

“And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.”

I have felt that the Lord had in mind the very perils that are