

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I should not have felt at all neglected if President Grant had passed me by this conference, to make place for others whom we should like to hear from, and who have not had the opportunities that I have always had on these occasions. However, I welcome the opportunity to give you a few thoughts which have touched me deeply during the conference and for a long time past.

INTELLIGENCE REQUIRED IN SPIRITUAL THINGS

I believe that as high an order of intelligence is required to understand and interpret the things of the spirit as is required to comprehend the truths of science and other secular matters. I believe that accomplishments and achievements in the field of religion are just as worthy and commendable and great as are accomplishments in the field of science, in the domain of business and commerce, and in all other worldly affairs.

I also believe that a great many people in this world do not believe this thing. I am convinced that the people of the world have so deprecated, in their own estimation, the real place and value of the spiritual life and of religious activity that they have been weaned away from allegiance to religious institutions, spiritual concepts, and this great world that is out beyond the so-called natural world. To me it is the greatest misfortune that can overtake the human family, and I believe that the youth of our Church, unfortunately, are not free from the influence of this worldly philosophy that has so engulfed the minds and thinking of men.

When I contemplate the beauties of this great conference—I have sat under its spell now for more than two days, rejoicing in the good things that we have heard, participating in a spirit that defies description, being renewed in faith and in determination to do my duty—I have thought, during all this period, of those who have not been here.

WORLDLY PHILOSOPHIES AFFECTING YOUTH

I have looked into the faces of good men whom I know, whose acquaintance I have made as I have been around through the stakes of Zion. I have seen good women here, whose lives and endeavors are given to the extension of our worthy cause; I have looked in vain however, for the hordes of youth who have not been here. I am very happy to think that many thousands of them are sympathetic with our work; very happy indeed to know that many are willing to respond to the calls that are made of them, going on missions, participating in the organizations and agencies of the

Church, and many, indeed, are studying the great principles of life and salvation which our organizations seek to teach. But I am also painfully aware of the fact that thousands upon thousands of them have been subjected and exposed to these worldly philosophies which deny the existence of the spiritual world.

Their education has contributed in no small measure to this situation, not purposely perhaps, but nevertheless truly, for I have but little doubt that there are to be found many young men and women who have lost faith and departed from the old practices and the old traditions, because those things have not only been omitted but they have been purposely ignored and oftentimes deprecated by the educational systems and influences under whose tutelage the youth have come.

INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS

I do not mean to impugn an express and predetermined purpose on the part of many teachers in the country to undermine the faith of their pupils. I think that relatively few would have at heart such a sinister purpose. I cannot believe that they would be so inclined. But I feel certain that in the determination that is in the minds of that great body of men and women who constitute the public school system of the country to keep completely separate, as we should always keep separate, church and state affairs, there has been the neglect of some perfectly legitimate opportunities to foster the best things that can be given to the youth of America.

I have been pleased to note that an effort has been and is being made to utilize our school system for the teaching of character and those principles that go to make for honesty, for virtue, dependability, and other worth-while characteristics. But I feel certain that a careful study and consideration of these very items would convince those engaged in that endeavor that there is nothing so potential, so effective for its accomplishment as to encourage the youth to abide by the faith, the time-honored traditions, the morality and the spirit of their fathers.

I believe that as I make appeal to the teachers of the country to encourage their students to keep open minds on all these questions that affect the faith of their fathers, I not only speak the sentiment of our own Church but likewise the sentiment of all good religious people who seek to bring to the youth of their churches the spirit, the theology and the traditions which they foster.

It is such an easy thing to discourage faith in this world of materiality, in this world of science, where we have laid so much emphasis on all the scientific processes and developments that have been so much in evidence the last few decades. It is so easy to say a word to undermine faith. I wish that those who have within

their power the formation of the views of youth, the cultivation of their character, I do wish that they would be careful.

As a tax-payer and a supporter of the public school system, which I admire, which I regard as one of the greatest factors for the civilization of the race, which I have always regarded as being an essential constituent of a democracy and on which my children are dependent for education, I have always entertained the view that there is no right on the part of those to whom that education is entrusted to in any way say one single word or promote one thought that will tear down the faith of my children and lead them from the philosophy of faith.

Now, our youth are especially susceptible to influences that lead them away from faith because, in my opinion, they do not always have an adequate and proper understanding of the Gospel of Christ. Sometimes I fear they seem to feel so much concerned about the injunctions and the inhibitions and the proscriptions, that they fail to appreciate the positive, beautiful, life-giving, joyful message of the Gospel of Jesus.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LAW

Just as President Clark has told us, the laws that have been given to us are inexorable and immutable. We cannot change them. We do not want to change them. No one does, who understands them in their comprehensive application to the lives of men and women and the world. Only those would do away with them who really do not grasp their true significance.

I wish that it were possible for us to teach our youth that all the enduring satisfactions they may ever hope for, all the real joys and pleasures of life, are to be had in pursuance of and not in contravention of Gospel principles. I wish they could feel what we here feel today. I wish they could know the warmth of church companionship. I wish they could feel the spirit that emanates from on high to mellow our hearts, to make us truly love one another and love God. I wish their ears could be attuned to hear the lovely things of truth, as the ears of these musicians hear the melodies and the sounds that some of us cannot hear. If they could be made to realize that these great blessings are to be had through compliance with the laws of God, through application, activity, diligence and loyalty, I am persuaded that many more would now be amenable to the influence of our organizations, many more would derive the joy and satisfactions which relatively few of us enjoy.

THE GOSPEL A MESSAGE OF LOVE

To that end I think that a great obligation rests upon you men and women to carry the message in its beauty, in its appeal, in its

invitation,—the message of Christ to those who have not received it, even among our own.

I never regard the message of Christ as being harsh. Sometimes it sounds a little harsh and rigorous, but I never regard it as being harsh. I always regard the message of Christ as being kindly, persuasive, forgiving and loving. I can't picture our Lord and Savior in any atmosphere other than that of love and kindness. I have always regarded the condemnations and penalties of which we sometimes speak as being largely in the nature of deprivations and retardations in our progress, for we are told, in what seems to me to be the very genius of the Gospel according to modern revelation—in the vision of the glories—that every one is to receive even more than he anticipates, but that the highest and the most perfect and the lovely blessings of the future are in store for those who live the Christly life upon which those blessings are predicated.

So I would make the Gospel inviting if I could. I would not moderate any of our standards, but I would, if I could, make all the youth know that there is no happiness except in goodness, and that the way to trouble is through sin.

God help us to give the true message of Jesus Christ to those who are not here, to the children we love, without whom we cannot be happy when our associations are renewed in the life to come, Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Guide us, O thou great Jehovah."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

CHANGELESS TRUTHS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Commenting upon the unjustifiable attempts of strong nations to subdue weaker nations, one of our leading popular contributors to syndicated newspapers said yesterday:

Out of all history you will find but one world conqueror who came with clean hands, and those hands the soldiers pierced with iron spikes as they nailed the Nazarene to the cross.

It was this same clean world conqueror who said:

— Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man * * * ; and whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, I will liken unto a foolish man.

We are living in a changing world, and some of us are becoming