

I pray for the blessings of God upon us all, that we may be unto all people a light and life and a help in this darkened world, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

#### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

As has been expressed during the meetings of this Conference, this is a great Church, a great people, and great have been our accomplishments. I was impressed as my father, Elder George F. Richards, opened the meeting this morning by his enumeration of some of the great things the Church has achieved up until the present time. I believe that we are only in the process of preparation for far greater achievements and accomplishments, for the Lord expects it at our hands. This is His Church and it is His Kingdom. Its destiny has been decreed and proclaimed by the prophets of old, and ultimately it is the Kingdom that shall fill the earth. With that thought in mind we should seek to prepare ourselves for every event of the Lord's providence concerning us and be prepared to carry on His Kingdom.

#### THE PRIESTHOOD AS A MEANS OF BRINGING PEACE

Brother Clark expressed in his opening remarks not a great fear that we should be attacked by any foreign foe, and I have felt that way in my own heart for some time. But in analyzing the prophecies of the scriptures it seems to me that we are in some danger lest there should be people arise against people, and this in our land, as well as nation against nation, and I have always felt that if we could live nearer to one another, love one another as the Lord intended we should do that this brotherhood that is being built up through the Priesthood that we bear would be the thing that would preserve us against bloodshed. In the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants we are told that the day will come when every man who is not willing to take up his sword and fight against his neighbor should flee to Zion for safety, but if we keep close to the spirit of this great Priesthood that we bear, this brotherhood, we should be able to live at peace with one another and not have to take up the sword against our neighbors.

#### TOLERANCE IN POLITICS COMMENDED

With the wonderful achievements of the Church I feel there are some weaknesses that we should have pointed out. You will remember that Paul, in indicating the purpose of the organization of the Church, said that among other things it was for the perfecting of the Saints. Ever since I was a young man there has been one thing that has not been pleasing to me. It seems to me that it is a disturbing influence and probably the most disturbing of all influences in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, and that is this political discord. I know I am stepping in where angels fear to tread, but since I am not a politician I think I might be privileged to say a word or two on this subject. Notwithstanding the

loyalty we bear to the Church, and all the service we render, somehow our minds become darkened when we talk of political things, and those who otherwise should be the best of friends and the best of neighbors become at variance with each other. I have heard President Grant tell in years gone by of some of the brethren who went Ward Teaching together and before they separated they were fist-fighting because they got into arguments over politics. I was with a group of brethren one day, when the discussion became so hot that one brother said, "If the Savior should come back to the earth and He was a member of the other party I would oppose Him." I could understand this statement, but I did not believe the brother meant it. He saw me walk away in disgust so he hunted me up the next day and apologized for what he had said.

This extreme attitude has always annoyed me. My family has sometimes said, "How is it that you do not take a more active part in politics?" And I have said, "Because I love my friends too much, and I have seen too many men lose their friends because of their activity in politics." I do not see, brethren, why we cannot stand for correct principles and not have to "haul through the mire," so to speak, each other just because we go out after a political position. I sometimes wonder if our brethren realize how much they do to destroy the faith of the youth of the Church and cause unfavorable criticism and comment by those who are not of the Church when they assail each other as has been the practice for all the years since I have been old enough to remember. We ought to feel that we owe our allegiance to the Church and to the Priesthood and to our brethren. We should love our brethren until the love that binds us together will be stronger than the cords of death, and this ought to cause us to sustain and uphold each other under all circumstances and not permit the evil one to get an inroad into our midst because of these disturbing influences.

#### SAFETY IN FOLLOWING ADVICE OF CHURCH LEADERS

Another word about politics, if you will permit it. We have had testimonies today from some of the brethren. I was particularly impressed with what Brother Evans said, that he believed in following the Prophet of the Lord even though he did not think he was right, because he found he always was right, and he said those of us who are not willing to follow him when we do not think he is right do not believe that he is a Prophet of God. This accords with my feelings along this line. I have had the privilege for the past two and a half years, with my counselors, of meeting weekly with the First Presidency of this Church, and I want to testify to you here today, my brethren and sisters, that they are in very deed prophets of God, and I am willing to follow them when their judgment is different from mine because to me they are more than ordinary men; they are men clothed upon by the power of God. When we raise our hands to sustain them as prophets, seers, and revelators, we ought to think twice before we criticize their judgment and their recommendations.

A report came to the office the other day from one of our brethren

who said, "Well, if the President expresses his opinion on these political matters, the people will do just the opposite to what he says." We would not like to believe that this is true among the Latter-day Saints, but if there are any of us who feel that it is true, we ought to search our own hearts and see if that is the kind of faith we have in the leaders of this great Church. There are those all over the world including religious leaders today who are looking with despair upon the present conditions of the world and they are wondering how we are going to find the way out. While I was in the South, I read in one of the largest newspapers in Atlanta a long article written by Bishop Candler of the Methodist Church of Atlanta, a man who is respected all over this nation, and one of the great leaders of his people. After decrying the conditions, the lack of faith and the lack of leadership in the world, he closed his article with these words, "We need the reappearance of prophets sent of God." When even religious leaders feel the need of prophets sent of God why shouldn't we feel the need of following the prophets who are in our midst who are sent of God? Shortly after that, in the city of Atlanta, in November 1936, Bishop Ainsworth addressed a conference of Methodists relative to alarming conditions observed today and urged the people of all faiths to engage in a crusade to save civilization from moral decadence. And then the Bishop added: "Never in the nation's history was the arresting voice of a prophet of God more needed than it is today. Tremendous forces of reconstruction are at work and their mighty currents are changing the shore lines of our civilization. Millions of our people have lost their moorings. Civilization has reached the crossroads and the more serious minded leaders of the race are wondering where we are going."

If this be the opinion of religious leaders of the world and they openly acknowledge that never in the history of the world has the arresting voice of a prophet been so needed as it is today, why shouldn't we pray for faith and courage to follow the prophets the Lord has given us? So far as I am concerned I wish we as Latter-day Saints had the faith to follow these men whom God has chosen to lead us, endowed with the inspiration and revelation of heaven, so that their voices and their judgments and their instructions and their advice would have first place in our lives regardless of any political party or political doctrine. It seems to me that it has almost come to the point in our Church where even if they express their thoughts on some of the very fundamentals for which the Church has ever stood, for which every prophet in this great Church has stood, they are criticized by some of the brethren on the grounds that they are meddling in politics.

#### WARNING OF DR. JOHN M. REINER

There stood in this pulpit in January 1898 Dr. John M. Reiner, a Roman Catholic Priest of New York, who had been attending the meetings regularly for some time, and President Woodruff and Brother Penrose were on the stand. President Woodruff called him up to the pulpit. He stood here, and after giving the reasons why he had found it necessary, impelled by the reports he had heard, to make investigation

of our claims, he made this statement: "The Church of God need never fear an enemy from without, but the enemy within your walls, he who walks with you side by side into your tabernacle, or into your temple, he who makes the same profession, he who speaks the same language, he who pretends to have the same religion and believe in the same revelations and to be guided by the same authority, but whose heart is far from God and who lives an ungodly life. He is the worst enemy you have and in due time if you do not clean out your house from such people, God Himself will smite you with pestilence."

I believe, my brothers and sisters, that our greatest danger as a people is from within, and I would like to believe that the Latter-day Saints believe in the leaders of this great Church to the point that they are willing to accept their counsel and advice. I think sometimes we almost bind them so that when they have the inspiration of Almighty God and would like to speak to us they hesitate for fear some of us will feel that they are interfering with political affairs. If I had my way I would welcome the day, come it as soon as God may grant, when these men with whom I am associated so intimately and whose very intimate thoughts I know and their desires for the welfare of this people and the welfare of the Kingdom of God, might not only be issuing instructions to this great Church but to this great nation, which we are told is a land choice above all other lands and over which Christ our Lord, as decreed, shall reign, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, because in this land it is decreed that the new Jerusalem of the Lord our God shall be established.

#### A PRAYER ANSWERED

I heard an experience the other day of one of our Stake Presidents, a grand and noble man, and I respect him, and I am going to take the liberty of repeating it here without mentioning names because it illustrates the kind of faith I think we ought to have in these leaders of ours. Sometime ago an article was published over the signature of the First Presidency and it seemed to irritate him and it irritated others because it dealt with some political measures, and he thought it was not right for the Presidency of this Church to express themselves on such matters. He went into his office to think it over, and he went into his private room and prayed about it. When he came out from that moment of prayer, he decided that if these men were prophets of God they had a right to speak, and it was his place and his responsibility to follow them and to respect their counsel and advice. That is the kind of faith I like to see in this Church.

#### A LESSON IN THE SAVIOR'S WORDS TO PETER

I think sometimes as I listen to men criticizing the leaders of the Church, and we have some among us who do that, of the words of the Savior to Peter of old. You will remember that constantly Peter was checked on by the Master, and shortly before His crucifixion, He said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and

when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter was sure he was converted and so he answered. "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death". And He said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

And so I feel sometimes when we are not willing to follow the counsel and advice of our leaders, in substance, we, as Peter of old, deny that we know them; for surely we know them not in their true positions and in their true work as prophets of the Lord Jesus Christ except we be willing to follow them even though it be unto death itself.

The Master said, "They have Moses and the prophets . . . if they hear not the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

God grant that ye may stand as united brethren and that we uphold those whom God has appointed to preside over us, and if we do this, my brethren and sisters, I have no fear but that this Church shall hurriedly and speedily take its place as God has decreed. God bless you all I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Choir sang "Still, Still With Thee" by Shelley.

### ELDER SYLVESTER Q. CANNON

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

It is a source of great joy to me, my brothers and sisters and friends, to meet with you in the sessions of this Conference and to partake of the spirit of these gatherings. I rejoice greatly in the presence with us today of President Heber J. Grant in the measure of health and strength that he enjoys. I pray with you that he may continue to enjoy vigor and life and accomplish the mission which he has before him in great measure, as long as he desires. I pray for the blessings of the Lord to attend his Counselors. I sustain them fully and wholly, and I sustain all of the General Authorities and all the local authorities; all the Stake Presidencies and Ward Bishoprics and Mission Presidents; and all who have part in this work. I realize how great and responsible this work is, and what a joy there is in the accomplishment of righteous deeds. I pray that the Lord may bless me in the things I may have to say this afternoon.

There have been many important messages presented to us today and yesterday. I sense all that has been said as being of great importance and welfare to us, and I desire that I may sustain in every respect the responsibilities that rest upon me, in common with you, to measure up to every duty and labor to the very fullest extent possible. I have in my heart nothing but great rejoicing in the work in which I am engaged with you and I desire to qualify in the fullest measure for every undertaking, responsibility, and blessing that the Lord has given me. I realize that the blessings of the Lord are with us. I realize that His desire is for our progress, our salvation, and our exaltation in every respect, to the extent that we will fulfil every commandment that He