

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

My brethren and sisters: My heart has been stirred with deep gratitude for the teaching and testimonies of my brethren during this Conference, and for my membership in this Church and my association with you Latter-day Saints.

THE EARTH BEING PREPARED FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST

It has been made plain to us today, as we have been taught all our lives, that judgment should befall the nations until men's hearts should fail them with fear, and as Brother Sonne pointed out yesterday, quoting the words of Brother Penrose, that the nations of this earth should be broken up like the potter's vessel. Notwithstanding these judgments, I take it there is little any of us can do about it because the Lord is to continue His judgments among the nations until they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more.

Inasmuch as we can do little about this, we should be more concerned with the opposite force that is operating in the earth. We are not unmindful of the message of Mormonism to the world, that He has sent His messenger to prepare the way of His coming, and He shall come quickly to His Temple, and He shall come cleansing and purifying as refiner's fire and fuller's soap. And so the thing that should concern us as Latter-day Saints, if we are in harmony with His great plan of preparation, is to prepare for His coming.

I desire to read a few words from the 50th Psalm, as I think David saw this relating to our day and the great work that should come forth among the children of men:

The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof."

Your missionary boys have been called into the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, declaring that the mighty God hath spoken.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

And how has He shined out of Zion, the perfection of beauty? By sending forth His ambassadors of eternal truth to the nations of the earth to bear witness of the restoration of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.

Gather my Saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

SACRIFICE REQUIRED OF ALL THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Not only were our pioneer fathers and mothers required to sacrifice in order that they might prove themselves worthy to stand among the Saints of God who are to be gathered in these latter days, but we are required to make sacrifices also. We may not be required to forsake our homes and go into new lands; we may not be required to lay our loved ones away by the side of the road; we may not be driven out by friends and ridiculed and reviled, but the Lord nevertheless expects sacrifices at our hands. And I want to say to you that I think the Lord does not let such sacrifices go unrewarded.

FAITH SHOWN BY THE MOTHER OF JESSE KNIGHT

Some of you will have read with interest the book recently published by J. Will Knight on the Knight Family, and I find there an incident that appealed to me as a reward of sacrifice. If you have read it, you will recall that Brother Jesse Knight's mother had been married before she married Jesse's father, and after becoming a widow and burying two children, she gathered with the Saints in Kirtland; and as she arrived there, the brethren were around trying to gather contributions from the scanty means of the Saints in order to be able to liberate the Prophet Joseph. Sister Knight turned her purse upside down and gave them all she had; I think some fifty dollars. The Lord of Israel and the angels in heaven could not overlook a sacrifice of that kind. She later married Jesse's father, and raised a family. Then her husband died and she moved to St. George. When she came to visit Jesse on one occasion, she failed to say anything to him about becoming active in the Church. For many years Jesse had done very little, and finally, when she was about to return, he said:

"Mother, how is it you are not preaching to me as you usually do?"

She answered: "Jesse, I have prayed in the Temple for my children many times, and on one occasion the Lord made known to me that I was not to worry about you any more, that you would one day understand for yourself—and I never intend to argue again with you about religion."

And you know how literally this promise was fulfilled, for soon after Jesse did understand, and he rendered a great service to the Church.

MANIFESTATIONS OF FAITH AMONG THE SAINTS

There is hardly a family among the Saints but what could testify of the sacrifices that have been made for the Gospel in this last dispensation. I remember working with a young man before I went on my first mission. He had been driven from his home, and his young wife had deserted him because as he was passing a street corner one evening in an eastern city, on his way home from work, he stopped at a street meeting and listened to the testimonies of our missionaries, and their explanation of the doctrines of the Church, which he explained pierced his heart like a two-edge sword. He joined the Church and his people cast him out. I was with him when he received a telegram announcing the birth of his

child. He did not have the spirit of hardness or retaliation. He said, with feelings of emotion and tears in his eyes: "The only desire I have in my soul is some day to stand on that same street corner and proclaim to the people of my own town the restoration of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

We may not have to make such sacrifices as have been made in years gone by, but as I travel through the Church and witness the marvelous manifestations of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, I feel impressed that the Lord truly has gathered His Saints who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. In all the Auxiliary organizations of the Church we see how people give of their time and their talents for the building up of the Kingdom. Right here, we witness the sacrifice of the Tabernacle Choir members to carry on their great work. We just presented the Aaronic Priesthood pageant, and in its preparation there were those, such as Sister Evelyn Wood and Brother Lee A. Palmer, who worked through two nights without any sleep; the boys came night after night to practice. We enjoy what is going on but we little realize the sacrifice back of it all. We sat here and listened to a wonderful quartette of our brethren from Southern California, and I am sure they paid their own transportation to come here and sing for us. The sacrifices made for missionary and Temple work are marvelous. There is a spirit of sacrifice in the heart of every true Latter-day Saint who has been touched with the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the power by which this work is moving onward in the world.

PROMISES OF THE LORD TO THOSE WHO SERVE HIM

We often have quoted to us the third chapter of Malachi, which I feel relates to this people in our day and time, when the Lord was to send His messenger and prepare the way for His coming. Then He indicates that from their fathers' days they had departed from Him, and they asked how, and he said: "In payment of your tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation," meaning the nation of Israel.

Then He promises to pour out the blessings of heaven upon them if they will return unto Him, and we usually stop at about that point. I desire to read the latter part of that chapter, commencing with the 13th verse:

Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?
Ye have said, It is vain to serve God.

Have you ever heard such a conversation in the midst of the Latter-day Saints?

And what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?
And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

We often hear people remark that the wicked are blessed even above many of the faithful Saints, and that is what Malachi of old heard.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day When I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Those of us who have labored in different parts of the Church and have faith in the promises of the prophets have, I am sure, deep down in our souls a desire that when the God of Israel fulfills this promise, when He makes up His book of remembrance, when He writes therein the names of His jewels, we wish to see recorded therein the names of those whom we loved and among whom we have labored.

EVIDENCES OF FAITH SEEN AMONG THE PEOPLE

I think back to the time when I labored as a missionary as a young man in Holland, to the kindness of those Dutch people, and their faithfulness in keeping the commandments of the Lord; I am sure that if it shall ever by my privilege to enter into His presence, where the book of remembrance shall be opened and His jewels shall be remembered, I would not be happy if my Dutch friends were not there. And I feel the same about the Saints among whom I have labored as a Bishop in three different Wards, and as a President of a Stake in California, and the good Southern Saints in the South where I had the privilege to preside.

As I travel through the Stakes of Zion and see the people come from great distances, to listen to the representatives of the General Authorities who are sent unto them, I feel to say, God bless the Latter-day Saints. They truly are evidencing their faith in God and in His great Latter-day work by the sacrifices they are willing to make.

Some years ago I heard President Grant from this pulpit in a Priesthood meeting promise the Latter-day Saints that if they would pay their tithes and their offerings, the Lord would bless them with increased power and leadership in their own families. I was in a Stake of Zion a few weeks ago where a Bishop was released after a service of twenty-three years, and when we called him to speak, he told the great joy he had had in witnessing the blessings of the Lord upon the members of his Ward because of their faithfulness. He told of one brother and sister who had paid their tithing conscientiously and regularly for all those years, and he said they have a posterity of some eighty-odd and there is not one but pays his tithing and keeps the Word of Wisdom.

INSTANCES RELATED OF FAITHFUL TITHE-PAYERS

When I was president of the Rotterdam Branch in Holland many years ago, a sister came to me after the meeting one Sunday morning, and said: "Brother Richards, I have only earned a quarter this week. (That is ten cents American money). Should I pay tithing on it?"

I looked at her for a minute, and then said: "Sister, if this were my Church, I would not take your tithing. But it is not my Church, it is the Lord's Church, and tithing is a principle upon which blessings of the Lord are predicated; and sister, if you have only earned twenty-five cents this week, I surely do think you need a blessing, so I would advise you to pay your tithing and be blessed." And I wrote her a receipt for two and a half cents. (We happened to have a coin of that denomination in Holland). She later emigrated to Utah and raised a fine family.

Many of those people lived under very meager circumstances, and could not save anything from week to week. And when we brought them the Gospel, they would say, "You would not expect us to pay tithing, would you?" And I would give them the same answer. I have seen family after family emigrate to this land, own their own homes, drive their own automobiles, educate their children, and send their boys and girls on missions. I want to tell you the spirit of sacrifice has not gone out of this Church.

I stood on the porch of a beautiful home in Idaho a few weeks ago with 160 acres of as fine irrigated land as I ever saw, surrounding that home, and the good brother, a convert to the Church, said to me: "My wife said, 'Father, if the Church asked for it, would you give it to them?'" And he straightened up and said, "I replied: 'Yes, mother, and there would not be a penny against it either.'" Surely the Lord has been gathering His Saints together unto Him, those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

CLOSING TESTIMONY AND BLESSING

God bless the Latter-day Saints. God bless you, my brethren and sisters. This is His work, and He is busy preparing the way for His coming. It is important that we harmonize our lives with His great program of preparation, and when the voice of the Lord comes unto us that we heed it and that we follow the leadership of those who are sent to guide us in the way of eternal truth. May the Lord bless every man and woman in this Church for their sacrifices for the building up of the Kingdom of God, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang, "Abide With Me"—Monk.

ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

ACKNOWLEDGING THE HAND OF THE LORD IN TRIALS

Many years ago, my brethren and sisters, I became acquainted with a teaching in the 59th section of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, that to avoid offending God we must be willing to acknowledge his hand in all things. That teaching came strongly to my mind when we followed the casket of the mother of our seven children to the hillside. It again came to my mind nearly two years later when the body of our oldest