

own, "If my life is of no use to my friends, it is of no use to me," and those other great words of the Master himself:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, . . . Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:37-39.)

Brethren and sisters, Latter-day Saints, listen to the counsel of the Lord. What matter if we be but few? If every man at this conference, if every Latter-day Saint listening to this conference, would go out and see to it that he made of himself a center from which went out the testimony of the truth, we could accomplish miracles. Let no Latter-day Saint, who has raised his hand to sustain the prophets of the Lord, permit himself ever to depart from that instruction. Let him challenge any faultfinding and let him champion the truth.

Brethren and sisters, any Latter-day Saint having covenanted as a Latter-day Saint to keep the commandments of the Lord and then who refuses to follow the counsel of the Lord's prophets is bringing bricks and mortar for the erection of those altars of unrighteousness upon which other millions of Roys will be sacrificed. Let us remember it.

God give us courage, give us vision and above all give us faith, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER LE GRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

Brethren, it is good to be here to share with you the inspiration and teachings of this conference. We have heard enough already, that if we can just remember half of what we have heard and take it back to our stakes and wards, they will be enriched because of these conference sessions.

PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIERS

A great deal has been said during the conference, and at the present time much is said and written, about postwar conditions and our responsibilities. In my work in the Church with the young people, particularly the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood, I feel that there are some things to which we can well give thought along this line, for the Church will have to remember that our boys will be coming home, anticipating a great deal from us. We have had many letters from boys who are in the service, in answer to some of the articles that have been written and published in the Church Section of *The*

Deseret News and in *The Improvement Era* by our girls, on the value of priesthood to young womanhood. Usually the boys close with words something like this: "It is wonderful to know that there are such girls to come home to," and then they tell us of the kind of girls they have met while they have been away.

It seems to me that the M.I.A. organizations will have a greater responsibility than they have ever had before, because these boys will expect more through having been away, and many of our girls have been waiting patiently, faithfully, and adhering to the teachings of the Church, waiting until these boys do return home. I hope there will be due consideration given them, for I am not unmindful of the fact that we owe so very much to them. They have offered their lives and all they have for us, and we ought to do all we can to make their homecoming pleasant and welcome.

I was very happy while in California, a few years ago, in listening to a radio broadcast by a minister of the gospel, to know that this Church has what he indicated the world needs today. He said, "What we need today is a church for the youth of the land. We have been preaching to the old folks and letting the young people go to the devil." Now I am grateful that we have in the Church a program for the youth of the land, that our boys and girls are being taught the gospel and inspired with the spirit of it, that they are being entertained and kept together in a splendid way. There is nothing else like it in all the world.

IMPRESSIONS MADE ON PROMINENT MEN

Some years ago the agent of the Holland-America Steamship line from Rotterdam, a Mr. Herschfeld, came here on a visit. I had met him in Holland. He had a letter of introduction to President Grant from the mission president, and President Grant invited me to the office because I could talk Dutch, and turned Mr. Herschfeld over to me to entertain. When evening came, I said, "Mr. Herschfeld, where would you like to go? I can take you to a show, or I will take you for a ride around the valley, but if you would like to see Mormonism in action I will take you to a Mormon bazaar." He said, "I would surely like to see Mormonism in action." So we went down to the old Granite Stake Tabernacle, on State Street and Thirty-third South. I introduced him to many of the Hollanders who were there, and he spent money freely. He was thrilled with what he saw. We went upstairs to an operetta that was beautiful, and then I said, as they announced the dance downstairs, "Probably you have had enough. I shall be glad to take you back to the hotel." He said, "Mr. Richards, couldn't I see the dance?" "Yes," I said, "if you would like to." We went down to the dance hall, and, on our way back to the hotel, he said, "You could not have made me believe that I could ever see a group of hundreds of young people such as I have seen here tonight, dancing together with no evidence

of any evil thought or anything of that kind." He said, "Mr. Richards, if I were a young man I surely would cast my lot with the Mormon people." Then he went on to indicate that his daughter was the wife of a professor, and his son was a doctor, and he said, "You know what they think of the Mormons in Holland."

When we were in Los Angeles, we had a beautiful party in the Hollywood Stake tabernacle, given by the Deseret Club. Mr. Evans, who was in charge of all the Church groups on the campus at the college, was there. I spent considerable time with him, and he said, "Mr. Richards, I wish all the ministers in Los Angeles could see what I can see here tonight."

Now, brethren, I often felt while in the South, that if television ever developed to the point that the radio has, what a marvelous thing it would be to be able to set some of these parties with our young people out where the world could see them.

PRAISE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM

I thank the Lord for the leadership of the Church in this youth program for holding our boys and girls together under clean and wholesome recreation, and I trust when restrictions are lifted that there will be increased attention given to this program here at home, such as it deserves. I would like to admonish the bishops not to be too stingy with the Mutual officers whom they expect to carry on this activity program. Don't tell them there is no money in the budget. Go out and get the money if it is necessary. These boys and girls of ours are worth more than our money, and they are entitled to the kind of leadership this Church is prepared to give. You can requisition the finest talent living within your wards and stakes, and you don't have to pay for it. No one else can do that, so there is no excuse for not having the finest parties possible. Then I think we ought to make sure that we maintain our standards. No boy ought ever to enter one of our recreation halls and mingle with our young women with the smell of liquor on his breath, or a bottle of liquor on his person. The Lord expects us to guard and protect the lives and honor of our girls, and such men are in no fit condition to associate with them.

MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES

Now, I would like to leave one other thought with you today. You have heard a marvelous address during this conference, by Brother Benson, on missionary work. You brethren will realize that because of the war many of our boys will be deprived of the privilege of going on missions. Some of them will feel that the years they have spent in the service will have to take the place of their missions, but we have a new generation of boys coming along, the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood of this Church, and I truly hope that

every bishop and every father and mother will see to it that these boys grow to manhood with a desire to fill a mission for the Church. It is not only a great responsibility that the Lord has placed upon the Church, to see that the gospel is preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, but the great missionary system of this Church does more for the membership of the Church individually and collectively than any other activity of the Church, in my judgment. When I was a boy, I desired with all my heart to go on a mission. I remember two returned missionaries reporting their missions in the little country town where I was reared as a boy, and as I have said many times, if they did not do unusually well that night, the Lord did something for me, because when I went home, mere boy that I was, I got down on my knees and asked the Lord to help me to be worthy to go on a mission when I was old enough. When the train finally left the station here in Salt Lake, and I bade farewell to my parents, I told them it was the happiest moment of my life. There were many tears shed upon that occasion, but there were a great many more tears shed in little old Holland when I left there to return home nearly three years later. When we were set apart for our missions, President Anthon H. Lund made a statement to us boys I will never forget. He said, "Brethren, the people will love you when you go into the mission field. Now," he said, "don't get lifted up in the pride of your hearts and think they love you because of who you are. They will love you because of what you are. You are servants of the Lord. You are clothed with his Holy Priesthood and that is what the people will love." I did not realize fully the meaning of those words until I went to bid farewell to the Saints in Holland. One little mother, whose daughter came to America only a few weeks before, said, "Brother Richards, it was hard to see my daughter leave, but it is much harder to see you go." A brother old enough to be my own father, knelt down and kissed my hand an affectionate good-bye. As I closed my ministry, I shed tears all the way traveling from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, as I thought of how marvelously the Lord had sustained and blessed me, and what that mission meant to me.

Then President Lund made another statement I could not help thinking of today when we heard Brother Kirkham telling about the boy on the street corner in Boston bearing his testimony. President Lund said, "Boys, if you ever lack for words to speak when you are called upon, just arise and testify that you know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and the Book of Mormon is true, and I promise you that you shall not want for words to speak." There isn't time to tell you how literally that was fulfilled. I remember one large conference held in Rotterdam where we had about fifteen hundred people present. Some of the leaders of the town came with their stovepipe hats and walking canes, and the mission president had promised me if I would take the minutes—I was secretary of the mission—he would not call on me to speak. Well, President Grant

happened to be on the stand and he said, "Call Brother Richards next," and so I spoke unexpectedly. Now, I want to bear testimony to you here this day that the words of President Lund came to my mind, and I walked up to the pulpit and bore testimony to the restoration of the gospel, and the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord did something for me that day; he lifted me up until I felt that the floor could have passed from under my feet, and I would still have been there preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Later, when some of our people were baptized and I happened to be in that baptismal service, they told me that my talk that night, which I knew came from the Lord, was the thing that started them on the way to investigate the gospel.

FUTURE MISSIONARIES

Now, brothers and sisters—there are sisters on the air—I know of nothing in this world that can do for your boys and girls what a mission can. Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3); and there is no way I know of in the world where men can learn to know God as they can in the mission field. I have heard President Grant say that the experience of his life that he regarded as richer to him than any other in his Church work was the time he spent in Great Britain as a missionary.

I would like to recommend to the bishops this thought, that every boy in the Aaronic Priesthood who lives worthy to go on a mission, be interviewed by the bishop, for a mission call initiates with the bishop. Do not attempt to be the judge whether he is financially able to go or not until you have interviewed him in the presence of his parents. I have tried that. I remember in one home we did not think they could possibly send their boy. We told the mother—the father was not a member of the Church—all we knew was we would be proud to have their boy represent our ward in the mission field, but we did not know whether they had any rich uncles or aunts, or grandparents that could help or not, and the mother said, "Bishop, if you will call my boy on a mission I will see that he gets the money if I have to work every day he is gone to provide it." Now, brothers and sisters, I feel that if we promote this spirit, keep it alive in the hearts of our people it should not be difficult at all for us to have one percent of our ward population in the mission field. We proved this could be done in two wards where I had the privilege of presiding. We have some ten to fifteen percent in the armed forces. The boys will bless you forever for the privilege that comes to them; and if they cannot go they will be stronger Latter-day Saints, proud of the fact that their bishop had interviewed them and given them an opportunity to go.

God bless us to do all we can for our boys, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.