

most desirable thing in the world, then I feel that my duty and yours is to repent and purify our lives that we may have claim upon God, our Heavenly Father, for his Spirit. Once we get it, we will have that peace. And regardless of the uncertainties of our lives, we will not worry over them, but we will have the peace that comes from the realization that we are the children of God and that if our lives are holy in his sight, our exaltation and election will be sure, and that eternity is so much more important than mortality. This life is not a goal, it is just a means of preparation for eternity, that we may go back, eventually, into the presence of our Heavenly Father and there enjoy whatever blessings he may have to bestow upon us. "My peace I leave with you." God bless you. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "O Say, What is Truth," by Jaques.

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

My brothers and sisters, I appreciate the privilege of worshipping with you in this conference. It is a marvelous thing to be associated together in the work that is so dear to the hearts of all of us.

TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT

Last Sunday night, as I returned from attending conference in the northern part of Idaho, I listened to President Clark over the radio deliver such a beautiful sermon on Easter and conclude by bearing his testimony of the divinity of the Christ and his resurrection, which testimony, he indicated, was given to him by the Spirit. I wondered if, in the Church as a whole, we realize the value of the testimony of the Spirit. It was Moroni who said that by the Holy Ghost we might know the truth of all things. In our Church we are rich with knowledge and testimony through the Holy Ghost.

Jesus said to his disciples:

. . . It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. (John 16:7.)

And he said:

. . . I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17.)

Then we are told that he shall teach us all things, and by the Holy Ghost we might know the truth of all things.

Nine years after my grandfather, Franklin D. Richards, had been baptized a member of the Church, during which time he had filled five missions in the United States, had come up through the grades of the priesthood to the office of high priest and was then serving as a member of the presidency of the European Mission, he records in his journal the following: "Most of all things, this day, I desire the Holy Spirit, which giveth life, yea life, more abundantly to both body and spirit." This is the power by which this kingdom grows.

You will remember how Peter denied the Christ thrice before he received the Holy Ghost, but after he received the Holy Ghost, when he was commanded that he should no more preach Christ, and him crucified, in the streets of Jerusalem, Peter replied, "Whom shall men obey? God or man?" And he considered himself not worthy to be crucified as was his Lord. This is the testimony of the Spirit and the power by which this kingdom is growing in the earth.

DEVELOPMENT OF GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

You will recall the admonition of the Apostle Paul to his brother, Timothy, when he put him in remembrance that he should stir up the gift of God which he had received by the laying on of his, Paul's, hands. Was this idle talk, or do we receive the Spirit of God by the laying on of hands of his servants? If so, should we not all seek to stir up the gift of the Spirit that he might guide and direct us?

I cannot conceive that any Latter-day Saint can be without a testimony of the divinity of this work if he will but consider what has been accomplished in the Church because of the gift of the Spirit of God which is in it.

It is said that during the twenties, when the elders were being persecuted in Great Britain, the government sent an officer here to investigate the "Mormon problem" and see what it was that made them so determined to carry their message to other nations. When he returned his report was that the "black secret" of Mormonism was the individual testimony of its members. And surely, brothers and sisters, this is the "black secret" of Mormonism. You can travel throughout the wards and stakes of Zion and the missions of the Church or go where you will, and wherever you find Latter-day Saints who have received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands, this spirit is evidenced through their activities in the Church. A power is there that cannot be found anywhere else in all the world.

LETTER FROM CONVERT

We received a letter at the Presiding Bishop's office a few days ago from a young convert to the Church through meeting our boys in the armed forces. He sent in a substantial amount of

tithing. Then he bore his testimony in his letter, and I would like to read a portion of that testimony to you today. He wrote:

Before closing I would like to mention that I have gained a very strong testimony of very many great, wonderful, and glorious things, since being baptized. I could not make this letter long enough to bear my testimony, but I would like to say that I *know*, with a sincerity, that I have God's blessing upon enclosing this money. It is a glorious inspiration when you see the road of life, the direction of God's path, and the beam of his eternal goodness. These things I have; these things I shall never forsake. With these, I have eternal happiness. Although this money which I am sending is termed in the thought of "coins," I know, we know, that actually it is a symbolic but compact measurement of one-tenth of what the Lord has given and provided me as a blessing in life. Although this measurement is earthly, it has a spiritual meaning, the same as all of God's ordinances. This ordinance I feel pleased, humble, and privileged to offer and perform.

The Lord said that he had never given a temporal commandment unto his children, that all of his commandments are spiritual, and this new convert to the Church feels the power and the spirit of it; and I thought of this when my father, President George F. Richards, was talking on the law of tithing this morning.

THE LAW OF TITHING

I read in the last "Kiplinger Letter" that contributions to the churches were falling off because of financial conditions in the nations. But, as the Presiding Bishop of the Church, I can say to you that the contributions in this Church are not falling off. They are increasing because there is spiritual power and meaning in the Church.

I remember while in the mission field, Sister Richards and I were invited by a member of another church to attend a lecture by an itinerant preacher who was going through the land explaining to the churches how they could get out of debt. His program was that they should turn to the Lord's way of paying their tithes and their offerings, and if they would just do it for ten months, their churches could all get out of debt. After the meeting I had the privilege of being introduced to him, and I told him I would like to bear testimony that he was getting near the truth, that we had been preaching the law all our lives. Then I added, "But what I cannot understand, Reverend, is that if tithing is the Lord's law of blessing his people, why you do not ask them to pay their tithing all their lives, so that they can have the blessing of the Lord, instead of for only ten months." He replied, "Mr. Richards, we cannot go quite that far, yet." Now this is the difference between a man-made system and one where the Lord puts into it the breath of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit by which we know the truth of all things. We do not send out any collectors in this Church for tithing. We do for fast offerings and for donations to build meetinghouses, as you know; but if you could be in our office, you would see the number of men who come in years after their tithing is due to make settlement,

because the Lord continues to speak to their souls through the power of the spirit of the Lord until they cannot find peace. We have gone back—not ten years—but twenty and more years to give credit to the brethren on their tithing record. The spirit of the Lord is a better collector than anyone in the world. We have ministers come in our office to inquire how we run the tithing system in our Church, and when we tell them that all the wards and branches send in all the money they receive to us, and we send back what their allowance is, they shake their heads and say, "They wouldn't do that in our church. The local organizations would take out what they need, first; and if there were any left they might send it to headquarters."

THE POWER OF A TESTIMONY

Well, that same spirit carries through in all the activities of the Church. The testimony of the Spirit of God is the most marvelous thing I know of in this world, and I would rather see that testimony planted in the hearts of my children than anything I know of today.

Brother Ballard used to tell about the colonizer in the northwest who had learned what a marvelous work we had done in colonizing, and came down here to write a treatise on it, to see if he could make it work. After trying it he said, "Mr. Ballard, you tell us what is wrong with it. You read it over. I have tried it, but it just will not work for me." Brother Ballard read it and said, "You have here a perfect corpse. If someone would just breathe into it the breath of life, it would work." Now you know what the breath of life is.

We were in the temple on Wednesday for seven hours and twenty minutes with the mission presidents. One of them told of his father in Canada who was sent up there to colonize when he was a mere lad, by the President of the Church. He has wanted to return for years, and his son asked him why he did not come back. He said, "I cannot return until the President of the Church gives me my release." And I have met many others all up and down these valleys who have had similar experiences. When they came here in the early days, they would have gladly remained in Salt Lake with the body of the Church and the brothers and sisters they had known, save for one thing and that is the testimony of the Spirit of God. When they were called by his servants to settle other localities, they were true to their call. This is the spirit by which the Church has accomplished so much.

FAITH OF MISSIONARIES

While I was in Idaho recently, a stake president told me of a trip he and his wife had just made to Texas. They wrote their missionary boy that they would pick him up—of course, they would make arrangements with the mission president—and take him up to Chicago on a trip with them. But when they got there, the boy said, "No, Father, I could not be a quitter. I could not leave my mission. I cannot

go on the trip with you. You and Mother go on and have a good time and leave me here in my missionary work."

Some of you have heard Bishop Isaacson tell a similar story about his boy. When he went east to make arrangements with his company so he could come into the Presiding Bishopric, he wrote his boy in Boston that he and the boy's mother were coming up to visit him, and the boy wrote back and said, "Well, Father, I would surely like to see you and Mother, but just remember I will not have much time to spend with you. I cannot spare it from my missionary work."

President Smith, this morning, referred to the seventy odd thousand missionaries who have gone out for this Church. I dare say that out of that seventy thousand you could not have found a half dozen who would have deserted their missionary call for all the money in this world or for any position that might have been offered to them. Is there any power in the world that can plant such feelings in the hearts of the children of men? Do you think Joseph Smith could have done it, that Brigham Young could have done it, that President Smith could do it? No, that is the power of the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Some of my Dutch friends, a man and his wife, came into the office the other day, and they said, "Brother Richards, we have filled one mission together, but we would surely like to go on another." Then he said, "If we sell our home and our automobile, we can finance ourselves." Is there any other cause in this world for which men would ask for the privilege of selling all they have—even to their homes—other than that they might bear witness to the truth of this great Latter-day work? Much more could be said about sacrifices for missionary work.

LOYALTY TO CHURCH LEADERS

Some of you will remember hearing President Anthony W. Ivins in a priesthood meeting here in this Tabernacle, tell how many times he had sold all he had that he might answer the call of his Church, and move on, even down into the colonies of Mexico, that great leader who could have been such a political leader here. Why did he go? Would he have chosen or elected to go of himself? No, he went because of a testimony of the Spirit of God that burned in his soul, and that is the power by which the kingdom is growing.

You have heard President Grant tell how he was offered a salary of forty thousand dollars to affiliate himself with an insurance company in the East, when he was but a young man. But he was called of God to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he could not accept the insurance company's offer. I want to tell you that some of our leaders today have given up positions that were worth just about ten times as much as the allowance they are getting from the Church to live on. They did not ask for the privilege to serve thus, and they did not ask what they were going to receive. They were called by the voice of the Lord's anointed and that is all that mattered, because in their soul was a testimony of the Spirit of God.

May God help us so to live and labor and teach that this testimony may ever live in the hearts of our boys and our girls, the youth of Zion, I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

This is a glorious privilege—to speak in a session of the general conference of the Church. I am grateful for it.

I know that the work you and I are engaged in is true. Bishop Richards has spoken of getting a testimony of this work by revelation from the Holy Ghost. I, for one, as an elder in this kingdom, know that the work is true. I know just as well as I know anything in this world, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God; that Joseph Smith, a choice seer, was the instrument in his hands in our day, of giving us the laws and ordinances of salvation; and that the keys of salvation have remained with the Church from the days of Joseph Smith to the present moment.

SALVATION FOR THE DEAD

One of the doctrines of this kingdom, in which there is great comfort for the Saints, is that of salvation for the dead. We know that in the mercy of God our worthy ancestors may become joint heirs with us of the riches of eternity—and this because our God is no respecter of persons. Joseph Smith said that the greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us—speaking to the Latter-day Saints of their individual responsibility—to seek after our dead. We know that we, without them, cannot be made perfect; neither can they, without us.

But at the same time, in this glorious doctrine of salvation for the dead, there is a warning to the Latter-day Saints. This warning arises because the doctrine is limited to those who die without a knowledge of the gospel. It has no application to us. As far as I am concerned, as far as you are concerned, as far as all the people are concerned who have a knowledge of the gospel, now is the time and the day of our salvation.

No people in all the world have been blessed as we have been blessed. We have living oracles at the head; we have prophets and apostles to guide us, to give us the mind and will of the Lord. We have the opportunity to walk in the light of latter-day revelation. And, accordingly, we have the responsibility to accept that light and walk as God would have us walk if we would reap the glories and honors of eternity.

PROPHET'S VISION OF CELESTIAL KINGDOM

Shortly before the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836, there was a period when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the