

SUSTAINING OF MISSIONARIES

I testify to you, my brothers and sisters, that the Spirit of God is with your missionaries. They are teaching truth, and they know it. They are paying their own expenses or their people are paying their expenses. You cannot question that kind of sincerity.

It is a sad thing, my brothers and sisters, to hear people say in their testimonies, while they are giving their all for the Church, that in their own homes there are some who are not living the gospel and are not sustaining them in the positions which they hold. Let us begin this business of sustaining one another in our own homes. There is a power of regeneration in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It lifts us up if we will obey it.

I saw Japanese creating pearls at the Mikamoto Pearl Farm in Japan. I saw them injuring an oyster and from that injury creating a beautiful pearl. That can be done with human souls. Some of us may be damaged; some of us may have within ourselves foreign matter, foreign influences, but if we take within ourselves some of that live tissue of Christ—as they take from a live oyster and place in another one, killing the one to produce pearls in the other—if we do that, brothers and sisters, we can make ourselves and those who are not working in the Church, those who are not active in our own homes, pearls of great price. That is the gospel plan.

God grant that we may respond to it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop

I would have been very happy to give my time to Elder Cowley. I am sure we could all have listened another hour to his wonderful experiences while away and enjoyed the spirit he brings home to us. I love the spirit of this work. I have loved it all my life. I think it is the most wonderful thing in all the world.

GATHERING OF ISRAEL.

To me, one of the greatest miracles the world has ever produced has been the fulfilment of the words of the prophets in the gathering of latter-day Israel and our establishment here in the tops of these mountains; this beautiful temple that stands on this block, our fertile valleys, and our very presence, for the Lord said he was married unto Israel, speaking of latter-day Israel,

. . . and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:14-15.)

And that is the reason for which we are gathered in this great conference here today, that we might be so fed.

We had the privilege of attending a meeting in the temple a week ago yesterday—all the General Authorities—preparatory to this conference, and one of the brethren, in bearing his testimony, indicated that as a boy he and his brother talked about the prophecies, and he said in substance, "If I ever live to see the Jews gathered back to Jerusalem, then I will know that the prophets knew what they were talking about."

Well, today, that is an obvious commonplace. We know, notwithstanding the fact that Jesus said that not one stone should be left upon another of their great temple, that that land should be plowed as an acre, and that they should be scattered, as the prophets indicated, among all nations and become a hiss and a byword, nevertheless the promise of the Lord was upon that land that it should be rebuilt, and that they should be gathered again and that it should become a great city. Compare that for a moment with the prophecy of Isaiah with respect to the great city of Babylon.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Isaiah had declared that Babylon should be destroyed and that it should never be rebuilt, that it should become the home of reptiles and wild animals, and that the Arab should no more pitch his tent there. Today no one would dare declare that the greatest city in the world, if destroyed, should never be rebuilt; but Babylon, the greatest city of its time, never has been rebuilt; the Arabs have not pitched their tents there because its ruins are full of reptiles and wild animals; but Jerusalem, the Lord had decreed, would be rebuilt, and it is now being built.

Brother Kimball, whose assignment is with the Indians, said that President Woodruff indicated that of all the prophecies that were the most difficult for him to believe and understand was the prophecy concerning how the Lord would fulfil all of his promises with respect to the Indians, and yet when we see the work the Church is undertaking today, and the response, similar in a way to what Brother Cowley has just reported from the islands, we can easily understand how the Lord will fulfil in every sense of the word the promises made to this great branch of the house of Israel.

BOOK OF MORMON VINDICATED

Some of us recall how President Grant, standing here in this pulpit, used to tell of his friend who graduated from college as a doctor, and he said to President Grant in substance: "I cannot accept your Book of Mormon because it is full of lies," and then he went on to talk about the fact that the Book of Mormon said that the former inhabitants of this land were experienced and trained in the use of cement. He said, "Everybody knows that is a lie. Cement is a modern product."

President Grant, having a testimony that the Book of Mormon was true, said: "If my children do not live to see vindicated the fact that they did build with cement and were proficient in its use, my grandchildren will live to see it." And he lived himself to see uncovered those great cement highways and cement buildings down in Central and South America, vindicating the truth of the words in the Book of Mormon. How would Joseph Smith have dared to write such things when the book was published in 1830 if he had been the author of it?

And another of the statements contained in the Book of Mormon which President Grant's doctor friend did not believe was where the Savior appeared here in the land of America following his resurrection, and the account says that his voice was heard all over the land, and this doctor said: "You know that is not true, for no man's voice can carry more than a few hundred feet," and yet today, as we speak from this Tabernacle, the voice is going out for thousands and thousands of miles, so today we have lived to see the truth of that statement substantiated.

CONDITIONS FORETOLD

There is another statement in the Book of Mormon that, in my judgment, no man could have made at the time the Book of Mormon was published, with any degree of assurance that he was telling the truth, and that is the statement in Second Nephi with respect to the work of the devil. I want to read a few words from the 28th Chapter of Second Nephi:

For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish;

For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger, against that which is good.

And others he will pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. (II Nephi 28:19-22.)

I doubt if there was a Christian minister in all the world who would have said there was no devil at the time the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, and yet when a questionnaire was sent out by the Northwestern University School of Religion in 1934 to five hundred Christian ministers, of the five hundred, fifty-four percent, or two hundred and seventy of them, said: "There is no devil." Thirty-nine percent, or one hundred and ninety-five, said there would be no judgment day; and eighty percent were opposed to teaching that hell was a place of burning.

SATAN DECEIVES WORLD

If the world could just get rid of the devil, probably it would be a different world. They little realize how much his influence and power is being felt, for, in the words of Isaiah: He decreed that he would exalt his throne above the stars of God, that he would become like unto the Most High. John, the Revelator, saw the history of this world from its beginning, when there was war in heaven, and he saw Satan with a third of the hosts of heaven cast down upon this earth, and he saw that he should deceive the whole world.

This does not leave very many out, and after listening to the brethren today we realize that we must be very careful if we are not going to be deceived, and in the words of the Book of Mormon:

... he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. (*Idem.*)

You remember the experience the Savior had when he went out in the wilderness and found a man possessed of the devil. No one needed to introduce the Savior because they had known each other in the spirit world; since Satan brought with him the knowledge he had there, he said in substance: "Why hast thou come to persecute us before our time, O Jesus, thou Son of the Most High?" (See Mark, 5:7-13.)

And then you remember the conversation that ensued and how the Savior cast him out, and he asked his name, and he said: "Legion," because many spirits had entered into the body of this man, and at their request, Jesus permitted them to enter the bodies of the swine, and the swine ran off into the river and were drowned.

EXPERIENCES IN HOLLAND

I would like to relate an experience I had with two of my missionary companions in Amsterdam, Holland. We went into a home for dinner. The mother was not a member of the Church; her son and daughter were. As we finished our meal, I asked her how it was she had never joined the Church. "Well," she said, "President Richards" (I was then president of the mission), "I find it too hard to live. I just could not keep the Word of Wisdom."

I began to explain to her that the Lord did not give us the Word of Wisdom to deprive us of anything that we ought to have or that was good for us but to protect us against the destructive elements that would destroy the vitality of our bodies, and with that a spirit took possession of her, and instead of the sweet, lovely soul that she was, she began to roll her eyes and looked up at me and in the most sneering voice I have ever been addressed in in my life, said: "Who are you?"

I replied: "I am a servant of the Lord."

Then she turned to her daughter and said: "And who are you?"

She answered: "I am the daughter of the house."

Then she turned to me again and asked the same question, and when I replied that I was a servant of the Lord, she said: "So, if you are a servant of the Lord then I have nothing to do here."

With that I called my companions. We laid our hands upon her head. We rebuked the evil spirits. We commanded them to depart from her and that house, and she fell limp on the floor. We carried her in on the bed, and after giving her a drink, in a short time she was her natural self again. The daughter told us that her mother and father had come to America some years previous, and they had something to do with spiritualism here, and she said: "Now the spirits come and annoy her in the night, knocking on the wall until she cannot sleep."

We had another friend in The Hague in Holland tell us that because he had interested himself in spiritualism, if he went to bed at night without praying, the spirits would literally lift him out of his bed and make him kneel down and pray.

There is not time to discuss this matter further, but I want to tell you that there is a spirit of the evil one in this world and he is trying to destroy the souls of men and gather them into his net, and he is trying to do it with our young people.

I would like to read a few words from an article that appeared in one of our recent magazines to show how the devil, whispering in their ears, tries to lead men and women away and ensnare them in his net, as Nephi says.

CHASTITY

I will read the first paragraph of the article entitled "Is Chastity Outmoded?"

Today we talk about sex with an unembarrassed frankness that would have filled our grandparents with amazement and horror. This new liberty in speech has its counterpart in behavior. In many circles the traditional restraints in sex conduct are considered stuffy and out of fashion. Chastity, say many modern people, is outmoded. (*Woman's Home Companion*, Sept. 1949.)

What in the world could the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, desire more than to make our young people think that chastity is outmoded? To accomplish this, he must make them believe there is no devil, and that there is no hell or judgment day. Thus "he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance."

Now I want to quote from another recent magazine article entitled "The Mistake." This article tells of a boy and girl who made a mistake the night of their graduation from high school, which mistake was followed by the birth of a baby. I want to read the last paragraph of that article which shows how Satan whispered in their ears that everything could be covered up, but how they found through their own experience that this was not true, because he is the father of all lies.

"I'm sorry, darling, for everything."

"Don't be," he said, "we're in it together, and we'll get out of it together."

But later upstairs, long after he was asleep, long after the house and street outside were quiet, Janet turned her head and buried her face in the pillow to stifle the sound the sobs made. Because it wasn't true, as people had said, that you could make a mistake and pay for it. You made a mistake and then you settled down, as she and Ken were doing, to live with it for all the rest of your life.

I read an article in the newspaper at the close of the war, indicating that in Germany there were thirteen thousand illegitimate babies whose fathers were American boys!

Do you believe that in the eternal worlds those boys will ever be able to forgive themselves for having brought sons and daughters into this world — their own flesh and blood — for whom they have never claimed fatherhood and for whom they have never discharged their duty as fathers? We should remember the words of the Prophet Alma to his son Corianton, and teach them to our children:

Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost? (Alma 39:5.)

Now, brothers and sisters, Satan is working every way he can to get us to disobey the commandments of God, and I tell you he would have every man and every woman profaning; he would have them all living immoral lives; he would have them disregard every commandment of the Lord if he could, in order that he might do what he had decreed to do, exalt his throne above the stars of God, and become like unto the Most High.

May God help us to recognize the power of evil in the world and to shun it and to serve the living God, I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I have rejoiced with you this afternoon at the excellence of the addresses which have been delivered, and I pray that for these few moments I may be strengthened by your faith and prayers.

In President George Albert Smith's opening remarks this morning he made reference to the two great forces contending in the world today with the human soul as the prize, and he admonished the Latter-day Saints to stay "on the Lord's side."

POWER OF EVIL

I was reminded of that as the brethren have spoken, particularly Bishop Richards, of the power of evil extant in the world today, and some evidences of that power. As I thought of that, I have remem-