

ten about the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said this, and to me it was the ringing voice of a prophet speaking.

Many have belittled Joseph Smith, but those who have will be forgotten in the remains of Mother Earth, and the odor of that infamy will ever be with them; but honor, majesty, and fidelity to God exemplified by Joseph Smith and attached to his name will never die. (April Conference 1946.)

I paraphrase those words today and make them meaningful to us: "Many there are today among us who would belittle George Albert Smith, and J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and David O. McKay, but those who do will be forgotten in the remains of Mother Earth, and the odor of their infamy will ever remain with them; but honor, majesty, and fidelity to God exemplified by the First Presidency and attached to their names will never die."

God grant us the strength of living to be united with the Saints, to live the principles of the gospel, to listen to these men as the leaders among us directed by our Heavenly Father, all to the end that his full blessings might be upon his Church, I pray humbly, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:**

The Swiss-German Choir and the congregation will now sing "O Ye Mountains High." At the conclusion of this song we shall hear from President Richard L. Evans, First Council of the Seventy.

Singing by the choir and congregation, "O Ye Mountains High."

### ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I recall President Grant's having said many times, "That which we persist in doing becomes easy." I have presented myself many times at this pulpit these past years, and I am not aware that it has become easy—or even any easier.

In all earnestness, if speaking here today to this congregation, and to those outside, is to be less than impossibly difficult, I shall need your help and that of my Father in heaven and I earnestly hope that I may have it.

#### PRIVILEGE OF REPENTANCE

With Brother [Marion G.] Romney, I have been impressed that the theme of this conference has been repentance. I was much impressed with the statement he read from President Smith's opening message of two days ago; and I remember a phrase from Dr. Merrill's talk of this morning: that we shall either have repentance or slavery.

I remember also a reassuring sentence from President's Smith's talk of two days ago to the effect that every blessing may be ours on condition of repentance and of keeping the commandments of God. I am very grateful for the privilege and the power of repentance, and I think there is evidence that we should all be lost without it.

I don't know what the Lord's eternal timetable is, but I am sure that he is happy to have it modified by the acts of men in the use of their free agency in bringing themselves to repentance. I feel sure that there is no dire prediction of any of his prophets that he would not be happy to have set aside by the repentance of his people.

#### EXPERIENCE OF JONAH

On this point I have heard two sermons within relatively recent times from the Book of Jonah, both of which have impressed me: one by Dr. G. Homer Durham in which he used the phrase the "Ninevah Cure." The "Ninevah Cure" of course is just plain and simple repentance. The other was by Brother Marion D. Hanks, who serves us so well on Temple Square. He used the phrase the "Road to Tarshish"—which is the road of running from responsibility.

You recall the experience of Jonah, that after trying to run from his responsibility he finally did what the Lord asked him to do and proclaimed that destruction should come upon Ninevah in forty days; and from the king to the lowest of his subjects there was repentance in that great city, and it was not destroyed. But Jonah, being human as well as a prophet, was somewhat disappointed that his prediction of destruction had not been fulfilled. He failed to understand, apparently, that the prediction was dependent upon obedience or disobedience, upon perversity or repentance, and that the Lord is happy to revise his timetable concerning the affairs of men on conditions of repentance.

#### CURE FOR ILLS OF WORLD

Again I am grateful for the privilege and power of repentance and am convinced that there is nothing wrong with this world (much as there is to worry about) that couldn't be cured by repentance; and I find this hopeful fact—and Brother Romney suggested it also—that regardless of what we may do with the opportunity, it is there. For a man to have a disease for which there is no known cure is quite a different matter from having a disease for which there is a known cure if he will only avail himself of it and pay the price. I am grateful that there is a known cure for the ills of this world. The picture would be one of darkest despair, much darker than any yet painted, if it weren't that there is a plan and a pattern for peace in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and

that there is the power and privilege of repentance if men will only avail themselves of it.

I say again, I do not know the Lord's timetable, and I think there is ample evidence that it is not for us to know it; "the day or the hour no man knoweth." (Matt. 25:13.) We read in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, before the ascension of the Savior, this word to his Apostles:

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power. (Acts 1:7.)

There are many things that men are permitted by our Father to change in the use of their free agency. I recall a comment from President Boyer of the British Mission, made a day or two ago when we met with the mission presidents, to the effect that "so long as I have life, I shall fight for the privilege of having enough freedom to make a few mistakes." In the use of our free agency we have made a few and more than a few mistakes. Some of them are costly, and we shouldn't repeat them, and we should avoid making them in the first place, if possible. But the contrary plan was the plan of Lucifer, the plan whereby men would not have been permitted to have freedom to make mistakes, and being able to repent are great privileges which our Father in heaven has given us.

#### ABRAHAM'S BARGAINING

I do not know what degree of repentance would be required of us to avert some of the things that might be imminent or at least remote possibilities. You recall Abraham's bargaining concerning the destruction of Sodom, how he pleaded that the city would be spared if there were fifty righteous souls, then forty-five, and so on down to ten. I doubt that we shall realize terms as favorable as Abraham was able to secure for Sodom. Apparently he was an astute bargainer, but the ten weren't found, and Sodom wasn't saved. I don't know that ten of a city would be enough to save us today, but I am sure that the degree of our repentance will be taken into consideration. And I earnestly hope and pray that we may give full repentance, and others with us, to the end that our Father in heaven in his mercy and in his patience and in his love for his children, which he has declared, and in whose immortality and eternal life he has stated his earnest interest, will revise his timetables, whatever they may be, according to the degree of our repentance. If he would agree to save a city for ten repentant souls, think what he would do for a whole nation or people who repented!

#### FAITH IN FUTURE

I recall some five years ago one of the world's eminent philosophers and historians—a British philosopher and historian—making some dire predictions following shortly in the wake of the war

He said, "It is the end," and then went on to elaborate that statement. But it has been five years since then, and I believe that this is a Church that has faith in the future. The statement of President Smith here yesterday is to me evidence of it—the statement that some two hundred or more places of worship have been built by this Church since the philosopher said, "It is the end." There must be many more than this number in the building or in prospect, which is another evidence of our faith in the future. It seems to me that our building program alone, and all our other plans for the future, are evidence of our faith in the future of this Church.

We must have faith in the future regardless of the ultimate eventualities. One of the greatest calamities in this world would be the calamity of sitting down and waiting for calamities. We must not let the things we can't do keep us from doing the things we can do. We must not let remote possibilities or even imminent probabilities keep us from moving forward with all earnestness and all effort.

I should like to say to the young people of this generation that they too must have faith in the future. In spite of all the uncertainties, they must go forward and prepare themselves as best they can for all the problems and opportunities of life. Whatever may come here or hereafter, the future will always be better for those who are best prepared.

No generation has ever lived without facing uncertainty. If those who faced the uncertainties of ten or twenty-five or fifty years ago had sat by and waited for what seemed to them to be imminent calamities, we should not have had the able and ready and well-qualified men that we have today, and that we need and shall need in the next generation.

So I say to these youth of ours: go forth and live your lives with humility, with gratitude, with repentance, keeping the commandments of God and having faith in the future and preparing yourselves for the future, as the Church itself continues its building. There is nothing to lose by having faith in the future, but there is much to lose by not preparing for the future.

I was grateful to hear President Smith say that last year was the year of greatest growth for this Church. We have so many things to be grateful for.

#### TIME OF THE END

I recall a reported statement, attributed, as I remember it, to President Wilford Woodruff. Some of the brethren of his time are said to have approached him (they had their troubles also) and to have inquired of him as to when he felt the end would be—when would be the coming of the Master? These, I think, are not his exact words, but they convey the spirit of his reported reply: "I would live as if it were to be tomorrow—but I am still planting cherry trees!" I think we may well take this as a page

for our own book and live as if the end might be tomorrow—and still plant cherry trees! In worrying about things that are beyond our reach, we should not overlook our opportunities with our own families and friends; in worrying about possible eventualities we should not neglect the things that need to be done here and now, and that are within our reach; the things for which we are immediately responsible; we should not neglect or present opportunities and obligations.

I should like to close with a statement of William Allen White: "I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday, and I love today."

#### ASSURANCE OF EVERLASTING LIFE

I am grateful to my Father in heaven for the assurance in my soul that he lives and that he is mindful of his children. I am grateful for his assurance of everlasting life. It has sustained my family these past three months when two sudden deaths have fallen upon us, and we would not have been sustained except for this assurance. And I would leave with you the witness of my soul that God does live, that Jesus is the Christ, that these things to which we are committed here in this conference and in this Church are his work and are of divine origin, and that it is our responsibility to carry them forward.

May his peace be with each of us, and with our children in the perplexing problems that confront them, and give us guidance and give them guidance, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### BISHOP LeGRAND RICHARDS

##### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

I feel humble, my brothers and sisters, as I stand here today. My heart is full of gratitude to the Lord for my membership in this Church and for my fellowship with the Saints and the brethren. To me, the conference started last Wednesday when we met with these grand mission presidents for two sessions in the temple and heard them tell of the fine work that is being accomplished in the mission fields and the wonderful spirit they have in their work. One who had just been released said, "I find it difficult to become interested in my business." Another of the presidents said, "I prayed that the Lord would let me stay a few months longer, and when my successor arrived and apologized for being late, I said, 'You don't need to apologize. You just answered my prayers.'" It is wonderful how these men can make the sacrifices they make and then feel as they feel. I felt the same when I returned from my first mission. I went into Oregon selling bonds for a company. Every home I entered, I found it difficult to offer them bonds to purchase; I wanted to offer them the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.