

ing to the Savior's command, until he had been endowed with power from on high, the Holy Ghost, then he went forth fearless as a lion, and when he was commanded that he should no more preach Christ and him crucified in the streets of Jerusalem, he replied: "Whom shall man obey? God or man?" And you will remember that finally he rejected the privilege of being crucified with his head up, because he thought he was not worthy to be crucified as was his Lord.

Brothers and sisters, if we could just get the Holy Ghost, the testimony of the spirit in the hearts of all Latter-day Saints, we would not have any of them saying that we harp too much on the Word of Wisdom. After all, God gave it.

God help us to so live his command-

ments that we may enjoy his Spirit, that we may ever be found walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **President David O. McKay:**

You have just listened to Elder LeGrand Richards, whom you have this day sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

We shall now hear Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, and he will be followed by Brother Buehner.

This afternoon we interviewed Brother Buehner, and just as he shook hands to leave, with tears in his eyes, he said, "I hope I shall not have to speak this afternoon, shall I?"

I suppose you will, Brother Buehner.

### **BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN**

#### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

**M**Y BELOVED brethren and sisters, I approach this task with mingled feelings this afternoon. The one difference between Bishop Richards' and my situation has been that I was asked to visit President McKay last night at five-thirty. Hence the turmoil in my soul has existed for twenty-four hours, whereas in his case, he has only had two hours of it.

I would like to say that this change has brought about an end of one of the sweetest experiences that I have ever enjoyed. The last fourteen years in association with Bishop Richards has been a great source of inspiration, joy, and happiness for me.

I found him to be a man of great faith. He has an abundance of humility, and in his heart of hearts there is a great love for all people. There has been a beaten trail to his door over the years by those who have been in distress, and they have never left his office empty-handed or without some inspiration and encouragement. And as he leaves us, we shed tears at our parting, but we are only two floors apart.

It was just fourteen years ago this month when the telephone rang in my office, and someone said, "President Grant would like to speak to you."

I answered the phone. The President said, "This is Heber J. Grant. We are reorganizing the Presiding Bishopric today. LeGrand Richards has been asked to accept the position of Presiding Bishop, with Marvin O. Ashton as his first counselor, and we are asking you to take the position of second counselor."

I was shocked, and I suggested to the President I should like to talk to him about the matter.

He then declared, "There are only thirty minutes before the next session of the conference takes up, and I want to have some rest. What do you say?"

I answered "Yes," and I have never regretted having answered yes to that call and all calls that have come to me in this great organization.

I think of Bishop Ashton today. I learned much from him. He had a heart that was full of kindness and love for all mankind. I say, "God bless his memory."

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This great honor that has come to me today I accept as a tribute reflecting back to those who made it possible for me to enjoy all the blessings of this great Church.

I think of my Swiss grandfather and grandmother, my English grandfather and grandmother, who paid a dear price from a physical point of view for the acceptance of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My Swiss grandfather came into the valleys of the mountains in destitute circumstances. He married his Swiss sweetheart and took her to a mansion out on Eighth East and South Temple—a dugout—where they lived for two years. But they were happy in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a short time my grandfather was called on a mission to Switzerland.

At that time they had three children. He accepted the call without any reservations. They had no resources except the family cow, and that was sold to the end that his traveling expenses might be paid, and my grandmother sewed salt sacks for one dollar a thousand in order to sustain her family and help her husband who was out preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My English grandfather was a man of great faith. As a young man he had the feeling in his heart that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ must be upon the earth somewhere, and that the Church of Jesus Christ could be found.

So he prayed to the Lord earnestly that he might find the Church and the gospel. Finally one Saturday night before retiring, he knelt down and asked the Lord in faith whether or not the Church was upon the earth, and if it was, could he find it.

During that night he had a dream, and in the dream he saw a street in the city where he lived, and in that street there was a hall, and in that hall two men were preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he awoke the next morning, he was so impressed by the dream that he got up, dressed, and went to the street, found the hall, and there found

two servants of God preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to this country amidst hardships. Because of the faith of these forefathers of mine, I am here, living in peaceful valleys, in the shadows of great mountains, and, above all, within hearing of the voice of the latter-day prophets.

So I owe to them a debt—a debt of gratitude, and a debt that can best be paid in service to this great cause. I was blessed with wonderful parents, a father who taught me the importance of integrity and virtue, and a mother of great faith—a mother who taught me the lessons of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at her knee. She taught me the story of the visitation of the Father and the Son, and I accepted that story without any reservations.

She taught me with reference to Jesus Christ and his divine mission. She taught me to honor the men who stand at the head of this Church as prophets, seers, and revelators. And as I have lived and grown older in life, I have found that her teachings were right, that they are true, and because of her I owe to this great organization a service which I pray the Lord will give me the strength to render in such a way that those who have asked me to accept this position will be satisfied, that I will please the Lord, and please you, my brethren and sisters.

I have been blessed with a fine companion, my dear wife. I remember the time in the early years of our married life when it was a struggle, and I labored in the bishopric of my ward; she gave me encouragement. Many times I have come home from work late. My clothes were spread out, my meal was prepared. I ate it quickly, changed clothes, and visited in the ward until late at night, arose early the next morning before my children were awake, and went to work.

For days at a time I did not see my children when they were awake. So this companion of mine has the credit of rearing our family, and since I have been in the Presiding Bishopric, being away for weeks at a time, she has taken

over, and has done a great service as far as my family is concerned, and I say, "God bless her."

In connection with this work I realize that I am following a great leader. I know of no man who has had at heart the welfare of the youth of this Church more than Bishop LeGrand Richards. As a bishopric, we have counseled long and often together in the endeavor to find means and ways whereby greater service might be rendered to the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church.

Bishop Richards has received the inspiration of the Lord's holy spirit, and rightly, too, for he has lived a life that qualifies him for the association of the Spirit, and out of it plans have been provided whereby both the young men and young women of the Church have been stimulated to draw nigh unto the Lord.

I have three sons. I love them with all my heart, and I have the same love for the young men over whom we now have the responsibility and privilege of presiding.

Brethren and sisters, I recognize that the Presiding Bishopric has a great responsibility in the matter of seeing that home teaching is carried on in the Church. This great priesthood assignment from the Lord makes it clear to us that it is the teacher's duty to watch over the Church always, to be with them and strengthen them, to see that there is no iniquity in the Church, backbiting, or evil speaking, to see that they attend to their meetings, and that all of them do perform their duties.

The word *all* has impressed upon me the fact that under no consideration are we as the teachers of the Church, as the servants of God, to teach the several and see that they do their duty, but to see that *all* of them do their duty.

So, with this great assignment resting upon the shoulders of the Presiding Bishopric, with the help and support of the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods, we should be able to provide the teaching of the gospel in every home, to watch over every home, to be with the families of the Church, strengthening

them in their faith, testimony, loyalty, and devotion to the Church.

The greatest authorities on the science of teaching indicate the best teaching is done where the listeners have an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

As of February of this year, a plan has been worked out where the ward teachers leave in each home a small slip on which is printed the topic or doctrine to be discussed during the coming month, and therewith are several scriptural references. This is an invitation to the families of this Church to prepare for the visit of the ward teachers, to know something about the subject to discuss and enter into the discussion freely. We have the hope that the teachers of the Church will be fully prepared, and as they enter each home, the family will know of the preparation made because of the intelligent discussion that will follow under the direction of the Lord's holy spirit.

I am convinced that there are many young people in this Church who have questions in their minds relative to the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Only the other day a sixteen-year-old boy asked his father, "What is the Holy Ghost? What form is it in? What are its functions? Do the General Authorities of the Church receive revelations through the Holy Ghost?" These are all intelligent questions, and they are pertinent. They indicate that this sixteen-year-old boy was thinking.

In any Church family where the gospel principles and doctrines are studied, the questions of the youth can be answered fully and particularly in the presence of the ward teachers, the servants of God.

"The glory of God is intelligence." (D. & C. 93:36.) If we are going to have a house of God in our homes, it must be a house where we study the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we gain knowledge in our homes, knowledge of the gospel, then the glory of God will be in that home. His Spirit will be there in rich abundance. There will be the spirit of love and peace and

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good will. And finally when we have finished our course here in life, we have been promised a mansion on the other side, for the Christ said,

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

. . . that where I am, ye may be also. (John 14:2-3.)

Brethren and sisters, the heavenly mansion of which the Savior speaks will depend entirely upon how much intelligence we gain in this life, and how much of it we apply in our lives from day to day. We are all candidates for the celestial kingdom, and if we gain that knowledge and apply it in our lives, there is no question but what we will inherit the celestial kingdom.

I sincerely trust that we may have an interest in your faith and prayers. For these two grand men who will stand at my side, I have deep respect and love. Bishop Isaacson has proved his worth, and when I discussed with him the matter of remaining with me as one of my counselors, he said, "I don't want you to feel that you have to take me. If there is someone else you would rather have, feel free in selecting him." Brethren and sisters, knowing him as I do, knowing his faith, knowing of the great work that he has done with the adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, knowing something of his fine judgment, I just felt that I could not give him up.

In Brother Buehner, I recognized a great youth leader, a man who accomplished a great work as stake president, a man who has splendid judgment, a man of humility. So I feel that with these two men by my side, with an interest in your faith and prayers, and with the help of our brethren, the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Council of the Seventy, and with the help of the Lord, we can fill the assignments that have been given to us. I couldn't help feeling the other morning, after President McKay had finished that great address, to say in my heart,

"Prophet of God, thank you for that revelation." I had that same thought in my mind last night when the three members of the Presidency stood up and counseled the great multitude of the priesthood: "Prophets of God, I thank you for your counsel. I thank you for your blessings."

Brethren and sisters, these men stand in relationship to the Church as did Peter, James, and John. They are the servants of God. The light of inspiration and revelation rests upon them mightily. That is my testimony. And what I say about them is equally true of these twelve witnesses to the world, the Twelve Apostles. Every one of these men represents the Church as Christ would have it represented. They have my love, and they have my respect, and they have my support. The same is equally true of the brethren, the Assistants to the Twelve, and members of the First Council of the Seventy, and the Patriarch to the Church. And I would have you know that we of the Presiding Bishopric are your servants. If there is anything we can do to help stake presidents and bishops with their problems, we invite them to come and counsel with us.

I pray that the Lord will bless us that we will be united in all of our endeavors, for I know that this is the Church of the Christ. I am just as sure of that as I live. The visitation of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith is a reality to me, not a dream. And the visitation of John the Baptist, and Peter, James, and John, and all of the heavenly beings who visited the Prophet, giving him the keys wherein the gospel was restored in its simplicity and its fulness, and finally the establishment of the Church as it existed in the days of the Christ, are all realities to me. There is no question about it.

And I pray that the Lord will bless me that I shall be built up in my faith. That he will forgive me of my weaknesses, that I shall have his spirit with me always, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.